

Staying Ahead of the Pack



The Handbook for Personal and Financial Success....

If you have a real interest in achieving it.

By Jim Foley

PREFACE

“Staying Ahead of the Pack” reflects a lifelong dedication to younger and older men and women alike, in all stages of their education, work and personal lives, who have a desire to start on a career path that will move them to both a Senior position within an organization and, more importantly, to a level of personal and professional satisfaction and financial achievement that will produce a very purposeful life.

For over 50 years in business, mostly spent in senior leadership positions, I have had the pleasure of mentoring people of all ages and in stages of their careers who asked the questions that I have tried to answer in this book.

“Staying Ahead of the Pack”

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Chapter I

Creating a Strategic Life Plan

“For Those who want to Stay Ahead of the Pack”

What is this all about?

As you read this, you are at a specific time and place in your life. You are at a specific age; you have achieved a specific level of education and work experience; you are at a specific place in your work or school career; you have specific dreams, goals and ambitions; you have a specific set of family and friend relationships and you may be engaged in a certain set of faith beliefs. The one thing that is for absolute certain is that every day you spend on this earth all these elements are moving in one direction or another. There are not many facets of your life that will stay unchanged.

The goal of *The Strategic Life Plan* is to develop a positive direction for your life that puts you in charge of where you want to go, who you want to be and what you want to accomplish in your life for yourself, your career, your spouse (if appropriate) and your family and friends. In other words, having a *Strategic Life Plan* will always keep you “Ahead of the Pack” for your entire life.

Often when you think about where you want to be in all of the important aspects of your life, there can be a tendency for it to look overwhelming . . . I can tell you with absolute surety, it is NOT. Everything you want in career and compensation, family, faith, friends, and special relationships is totally within your control and more importantly within your power to achieve.

A true fact is that your daily thoughts drive your decisions which result in the actions you take. The actions you take will then drive your destiny. Said another way, your inner most thoughts drive your destiny and nothing else. Since you are in total control of your thoughts, you are in total control of your future.

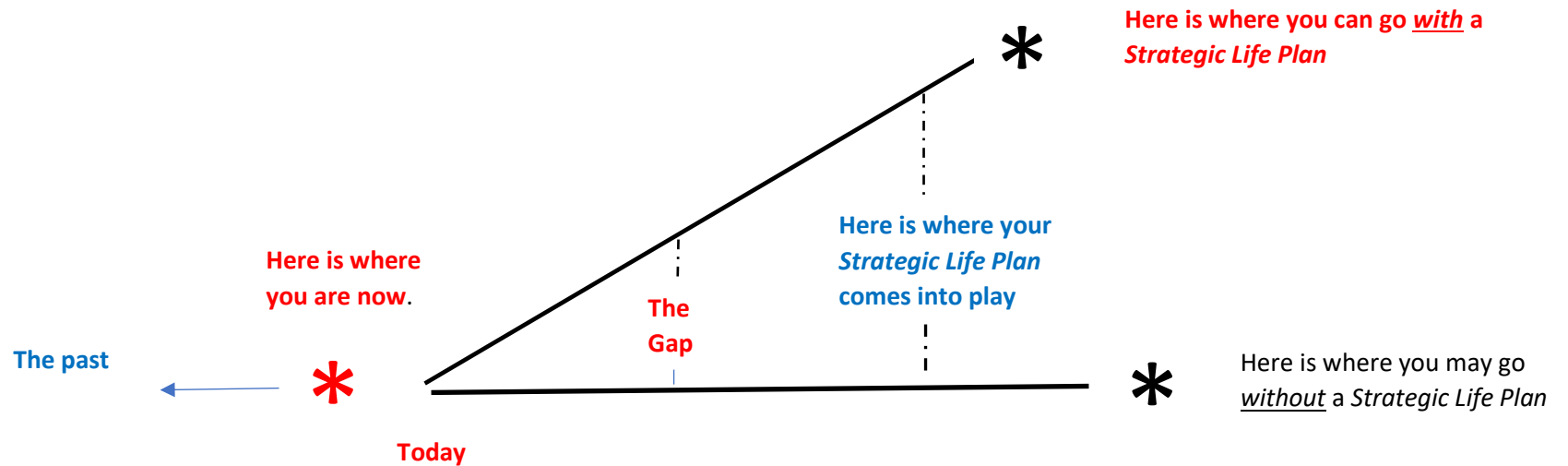
The past is not important other than to learn from it, otherwise forget it. Everything you do now should be focused on the future. Simply said, everything from “this point” forward is about creating your future not worrying about your past. As the CEO of IBM once said, “Never let a bad situation define you, put it behind you quickly and charge ahead to promote all of your positives.

The theme for *The Strategic Life Plan* can be summed up by what Henry Ford once said, “Whether you think you can or you can’t do . . . You’re right.”

There is never a time, if you develop and accept your *Strategic Life Plan*, where you think anything other than, “I can make it happen and I will make it happen.”

If we agree that both time and life continue to move on, the question you must ask yourself first is, “Do you want to control your life or do you want to let it control you”? *The Strategic Life Plan* is not designed or intended to allow anyone to just bump along . . . it is intended as a pro-active management tool for your life. *The Strategic Life Plan* is a process that puts you in full control.

It can be difficult at times, depending on where you are starting from and it is certainly not something you have to do, but it is something you must do if you are going to reach your personal, professional, family, faith and financial goals and dreams. In other words, to reach your full potential.



If your Personal *Strategic Life Plan*, that allows your dreams and goals to be realized, did not also require some change on your part, everyone on earth would realize personal success and happiness. We know that is not close to being true. We may have to make a few “changes.” We cannot just expect change to happen. As difficult as it will be, we will have to accept and embrace these changes. The ease of making changes in your life all begins when you fully believe in yourself and commit to your *Strategic Life Plan*.

Today is the first day of the rest of your life . . . if you have the interest and commitment it will also be the first day for something incredibly special in your life.

If your life to date has been good, build upon it to reach new heights you have not previously dreamed possible.

If your life to date has not been so good, forget it, but let that be a motivator to create a fresh start.

Again, at this point there is nothing you can do about the past and you should not invest one moment of your precious time thinking about it.

Everything we will talk about going forward will be about your very bright future.

The life goals of most people center around being financially successful, personally fulfilled, socially accepted by close friends, and possessing the ability to realize a purposeful life. This is what *The Strategic Life Plan* can deliver if you are committed.

Building the Platform

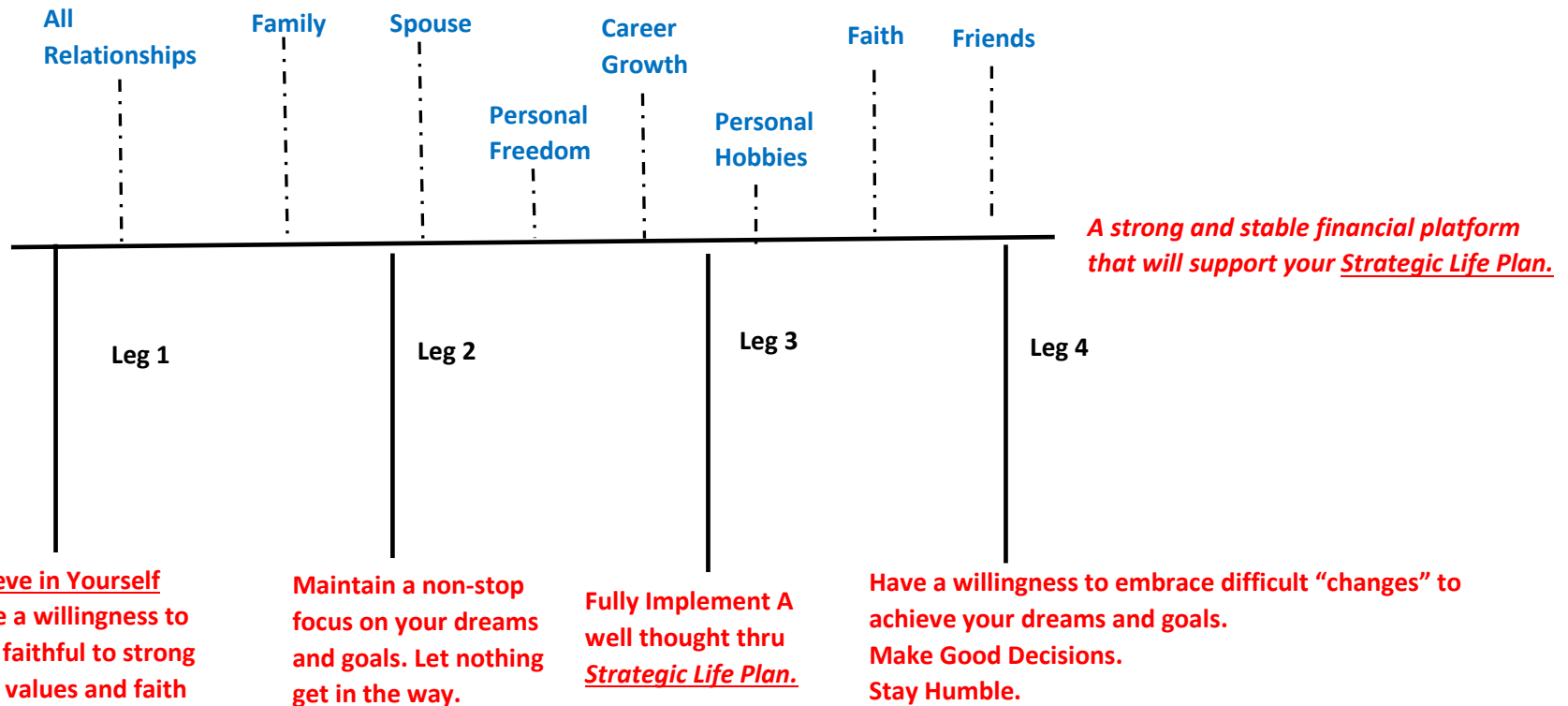
I ask for your understanding of what I am about to say so that it is not taken in the wrong way because as you complete this reading it will not take long for you to understand why I have started with this next topic.

Creating a stable and successful personal financial platform can easily be achieved with a fulfilling and meaningful work career accompanied by an increasing compensation path. Financial stability is the foundation that allows for success in all other aspects of your life. Some would rush to say that fun, family, faith, and core values are much more important than a successful career path that provides financial stability. I would partially agree. However, we have to consider that a platform that provides financial growth and stability strongly contributes to personal satisfaction and confidence which leads to a

powerfully good personal, professional, and family life. It is much easier to build a purposeful life if you utilize your current and future skills to secure a strong career path that produces financial stability.

Your Four-Legged Financial Platform

This is what a strong financial platform can do to support your life



The Strategic Life Plan enables you to be as good or even as great as you decide you want to be.

Chapter II will now describes Career path **Phase I** in building an incredible career and compensation path. *The Strategic Life Plan* goes through the **three phases** of building a career that results in a strong financial platform that then supports your purposeful life and allows you to meet all your personal strategic dreams and goals.

Chapter II

Being Accepted

“For those who want to Stay Ahead of the Pack”

Career Path Phase I

Setting yourself apart from everyone else by being perceived as consistently dependable, honest, trustworthy, and very likable.

Plan: This Career Path Phase I discussion is applicable no matter when or how you enter an organization, its environment, and its culture. This may be your first job or a new position in your existing place of work, or even just a change in “outlook” in your current job.

The Career Path Phase I qualities and characteristics should be demonstrated 100% of the time in **every** role and every position taken after Jr. High, High School, Trade School, College, or an Advanced Degree. In other words, in every situation and forever, **Being Accepted** is the starting point for everything you will achieve in your life. It is an ABSOLUTE that must be present for you to move forward and then ultimately upward.

Career Path Phase I – “Being Accepted” -Action Items:

1. **Never miss work, no matter what. Plan around personal issues and have a back-up plan if something very serious comes up in your schedule. If absolutely necessary, give plenty of notice and attempt to get a replacement to cover for you in your absence.**
2. Always be present for work 15 minutes before your official start time. If there are timeclock rules involved, follow them but be there early and always be ready to work in advance of your scheduled time.
3. Always, and under all circumstances even when you are experiencing a bad day, always demonstrate a positive, respectful, cheerful, caring, and appreciative attitude to your customers, co-workers and supervisors. Always have a smile and express in every way you can that you are happy to be there and are proud and humbled to be a part of the team. Be proactive in “sincerely” reaching out, smiling, shaking hands, engaging, and making eye contact as you continue to build work relationships. Never be a phony. When you genuinely like and care about the people you work with....it shows, and it really matters.
4. Work extremely hard and very smart, going beyond what is necessary and expected, never goofing off or doing personal tasks like text messaging during work hours. Always demonstrate a “make it happen” and “get it done” attitude. Always exceed the expectations of your supervisor and co-workers.

5. Give up breaks and even your entire lunch period when things are terribly busy. Always perform your job like everyone depends on it and you care about the successful outcomes for your team and the company. Demonstrate that you care about the people and the organization in everything you do.
6. Ask for the most difficult tasks when no one else wants to do them. Never run away from a challenge or problem . . . embrace them head-on and solve them. That makes you different than most. Professional Golfing's All-Time Great Arnold Palmer's dad once told him: "If you are willing to do things that no-one else wants to do, you will rise to a level of respect that no-one else can". That attitude always keeps you *Ahead of the Pack*.
7. Minutes before it is time to leave, ask your supervisor if they need you to do anything else before you depart for the day. Happily, stay later if it is requested. Never leave a task only partially completed unless it is accepted as a multi-day project.
8. Say goodbye to your supervisor and co-workers as you leave for the day. Never hurry out the door. You should consider your workplace as your home. Rarely would you leave your home without saying goodbye.
9. Volunteer for Teams and Committees outside your department to broaden your relationships and bring attention to your positive attitude and commitment to the organization.
10. Continue to pursue job improvement training and formal education that will advance your skills. Never stop educating yourself with formal or on-the-job training and education programs.

Insight: Former College Football Coach Urban Meyer is quoted in his "Muddy Boot" Leadership Program as saying: " When you are willing to do anything it takes to win....It is impossible to keep from winning".

Career Path Phase I- Cultural and Behavioral Topics connected with Phase I and beyond.

Every organization has a different environment or what is called “An Organization Culture.”

Each different culture has rules . . . some that are written in the Employee Handbook but many that are unwritten for the sake of political correctness. However, that makes them no less important. Unwritten “Organization Culture” topics may include:

- A. **Expected Appearance** – clean and professional dress with appropriate hair style, body art, jewelry etc. It is always best to be conservative, staying on the safe side of the limits.
- B. **Language-** you are considered exceptional if you are clear and well-spoken, always using proper language and grammar. Never use locker room talk at work, even among friends . . . NO Exceptions.
- C. **Attitude** – Positive, thankful, appreciative, gracious, happy, glass always half full, get it done.
- D. **Personal Attributes** – Team oriented, not self-centered, selfish, or arrogant. **Everything should always be about the “Team”.**
- E. **Work Ethic-** Always do more than expected. Arrive early, stay late and be productive. When there is not enough to do, ask where else you might be able to help.

Insights: **Regarding “A”** (above) you will be considered an exceptional associate and always will “*Stay Ahead of the Pack*” if you voluntarily conform to all elements of the organization’s existing culture with a focus on the desired “Personal and Professional Presence” that includes:

A professional appearance with a positive demeanor and proper language. Learn to speak the language well and always be understandable and clear as you communicate to others.

A great philosophy to follow when considering the proper personal appearance and presence that you want to display is to look at the senior position that you would someday like to hold. Look at the person currently holding that position and determine if there are demonstrations of characteristics, appearance and presence that would have value as you create your own personal professional demeanor.

Regarding “C, D & E” (above)-- be exceptional in each of these qualities. Give 110% to 120%

Remember the # 1 absolute of being able to ultimately accomplish change to an existing culture is that you must first be accepted and respected within that culture and then in time move up to a position of influence where you can impact cultural change. If you forcefully try to evoke cultural changes in Career Path Phase I, you may alienate people and stop advancing immediately.

The best philosophy to follow in Phase I of your career is to “start your job” by being unknown and finish it by being unforgettable.

Chapter III

Becoming a Significant Contributor

“For those who want to Stay Ahead of the Pack”

Career Path Phase II

We will now discuss how you build on your Phase I dependability, honesty, trustworthiness, and **likability** to gain influence and become recognized as a **Significant Contributor** within the organization

Plan: After you have built relationships and gained positive influence with both your Team, and hopefully a broader group of associates, by demonstrating dependability, a positive attitude and a high quality personal character, you can begin your move to be a **Significant Contributor** to your team and company. This is done gently and always up through your supervisor and chain of command, by making “positive suggestions” (offer new ideas) that will improve processes and productivity, improve customer service and satisfaction, reduce hassle or generate an overall positive customer experience. Always allow your Supervisor and Department Team to take credit for any of your initial ideas that are accepted.

Career Path Phase II- “Becoming a Significant Contributor”- Action Items

1. Begin the process of thoroughly planning your own time and activities for each day. Be sure you are being efficient with your own personal time. As efficiencies and focus free up your time, politely ask for additional duties and responsibilities to fill the time you have created with your own personal planning and time management.
2. When, as a result of “your own” good personal planning and the successful implementations of your own new ideas within your “own” job, you can then begin to identify potential improvements that may help your entire team and/or your company be more efficient, productive and ultimately successful. You can then begin to approach your supervisor with your ideas.

Career Path Phase II – Cultural and Behavioral Topics related to becoming a Significant Contributor

Always be certain that your Phase II “ideas” are presented as if they were thought through and developed as the result of your supervisor’s leadership and your fellow team members

example. At the end of the discussion it is critically important that your idea becomes a “joint idea” that is accepted by your supervisor and team.

Remember good ideas that come from “team collaboration” are generally implemented very well. You need to be looked upon by your fellow associates as a team player who came up with an idea and not a “company guy” who is trying to look good in front of the boss.

Always keep in mind that credit for “good ideas,” accompanied by a plan that can get the ideas successfully implemented will ultimately find its way back to the person who developed the idea. You will be recognized as the owner of the new idea in time. Be patient. There is an old humorous saying that, “No Good Deed ever goes unpunished”. While that is meant to be a joke, the reality is that good deeds and ideas are almost always accepted if they originate as a “TEAM Idea” but criticized if they are “an individual’s ideas”.

Good people, as described in Career Path Phase I, who as a result of hard work, good thinking and good planning, present good ideas for improvement and give credit to the “Team” most always experience rapid and successful growth in their careers. They always *Stay Ahead of the Pack.*

3. As you use your own “vision” and job experience to create new ideas, and your supervisor, team and organization accept those ideas, you should demonstrate a sense of urgency and ownership in planning and implementing the new initiative. You should inspire the “new idea” implementation but give credit to the TEAM. This is especially important to gaining the level of personal respect needed to gain the trust required to be a true leader.

Career Path Phase II-Additional Cultural and behavioral topics related to becoming a Significant Contributor

After your sense of humor, having a sense of urgency in the way you approach every task and new initiative you undertake will set you apart from most of your peers and put you at the *Head of the Pack*.

Planning the task or initiative and staying focused on properly completing it ahead of schedule and on budget is a quality found only in a few people. Those people are called leaders. Always give yourself an advantage by demonstrating strong planning, a sense of urgency and project ownership.

When demonstrating an on-going sense of urgency, always be sensitive to leading by example and demonstrating a focused work ethic toward the task or initiative at hand. Lead by example and allow others to respond accordingly at their own pace. It is not a good idea to push people in Career Path Phase II but instead let them rise to their own level of work ethic influenced by your example. At this point you are still peers with your associates and need to continue to build strong relationships so later, in Career Path Phase III, you can exert additional influence by using your learned leadership qualities.

4. Identify problems but always have a solution. No matter what the situation is, in every aspect of everything you undertake at work or in your personal life, you can always be assured there

will always be challenges, problems and hazards that will stand between you and a successful outcome.

It is incredibly easy to identify, describe and complain about problems. It is easy to talk about and report on them. Problems are a part of every task or initiative at work and in life. What most people do is complain about them and use the problems as an excuse for not reaching the objective. If you turn a problem into a solvable solution, you actually become known as a problem solver, which will always position you at the *Head of the Pack*.

Career Path Phase II- Additional Cultural and Behavioral topics related to becoming a Significant Contributor

What I am suggesting is, if you want to be considered an exceptional associate and stand out among your peers, always have a solution to offer for every problem that you and your team may identify.

Those people who always have a solution for an identified problem, rather than just an explanation of the problem, stand out and are the first to be selected for promotion. You can always power through challenges if you can pro-actively create effective solutions to keep things moving forward.

All the solutions you create for the problems you identify should be collaborative, team oriented and without ever pointing a finger toward any team or person who may have caused or contributed to the problem.

Remember, if you attempt to drive change, whether it is cultural, behavioral, or operational, before your likability, team orientation and positive influence are felt by the people around you, you are dead. You must achieve likability and respect before you begin to gain traction.

Good ideas and solutions for identified opportunities or problems, implemented with a sense of urgency and ownership along with being an accepted and well-liked team member makes you a Significant Contributor to the organization and will drive advancement quickly.

When that promotion to supervision or mid-management comes, you will then begin the process of shifting gears from being a doer to operating as a leader, manager, planner, and organizer.

First, after you reach the Career Path Phase I status of dependable, trustworthy and likability, you then move on to Phase II as a **Significant Contributor** to the organization. Next, in Career Path Phase III you will begin to take on the responsibilities associated with now being an indispensable associate who will **LEAD THE TEAM**. The next chapter is about how you evolve into being an **Indispensable Associate**.

Important Note:

If Business Development (Sales) is the career path you have an interest in following, I would suggest you first complete Career Path Phases I and II of this book and then refer to Addendum II in the back of the book for great guidance on how to enjoy a highly successful sales career in the field of New Business Development. After that you can return to Career Path Phase III which would support your later advancement in Sales Management.

Chapter III

Becoming the Indispensable Associate

“For those that want to Stay Ahead of the Pack”

Career Path Phase III

Plan The personal goal you want to achieve after you become a trusted, well-liked and reliable associate who has also proven themselves as a significant contributor to the organization by bringing new ideas, solutions and a team orientation to your supervisor and department, is to now earn the opportunity to move to the next level. As you achieve a higher and higher level of contribution, you will undoubtedly be considered by management for a larger role within the organization because you are now approaching the Career Path Phase III level of an Indispensable Associate. You have now established yourself as a trusted and valuable person within your group of associates.

This should have been your intention and goal from the beginning. In Career Path Phase III is where your management and leadership talents emerge and begin to evolve, and you begin to earn more and more influence and authority as you move *Ahead of the Pack*.

Insights: The goal of your *Strategic Life Plan* is to establish a strong and stable financial platform that will allow you the personal resources to have a happy, respected, and purposeful life. When you move to Career Path Phase III, your life and your role will change significantly from a doer to a planner, organizer, influencer, delegator and supporter of others. Welcome to this much different world of manager/leader, where the requirements for success begin to take

on a different look and feel and become more difficult. You will need to prepare to personally grow within the new role you will soon be awarded.

Leader/Manager-Supervisor

I use the leader/manager together in the description of your next role, even though there is a major difference between the function of a leader and a manager. There are generally three “levels of work activity” that are managerial in nature and in each there is a different proportion of Leadership and Management that must be applied.

First, let us discuss the functions and characteristics of the Leader and then after that the Manager so you get a better picture of how they are inter-related in one sense and yet different in another. You will ultimately see how they will fit together into all three levels of management/leadership you will experience on your way to a senior leadership position.

Leader

The role of “leader” is generally referred to more often as your position responsibilities increase and the number of processes and people grow in size. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), President (COO), Senior Vice Presidents, Senior Partners, Directors and General Managers are generally referred to as senior “Leaders”, in the true sense within an organization.

Leaders are largely responsible for creating a positive and productive organization culture where engaged and productive people are recruited and hired to perform as if they “own their jobs” and care about how their position affects the success of the entire organization.

Setting the standards for hiring, developing, nurturing, and building the “right team” is a critical characteristic of a Great Leader.

Great Leaders are also “visionary” and do forward “out of the box” thinking as it relates to the growth and position of the organization in the future. Leaders must also conduct oversight of the managers who have the responsibility to organize and implement the senior leader’s “vision” and then develop and execute the plans.

Great leaders demonstrate a “Strategic Vision” of how the organization can grow with new products and services for new markets, be more productive, hire and develop great people by creating a positive and professional work environment and at the end be more profitable by more effectively implementing the organization’s core mission.

A great leader always breaks down and delegates their “Strategic Vision” into individual objectives and then distributes those objectives to each of the managers who are then responsible for planning, organizing and executing the objectives within the teams that report to them.

You can tell that great leadership is present when each manager, supervisor and individual associate has a clear understanding of the “expectations” for their position and agrees to the role they will play in achieving the expected results of their team. People take “ownership” of their positions when they have a clear and specific understanding of what is expected of them and how their role fits into the big picture. Job ownership and high performance go hand-in-hand and completely come together when the associates not only know how they fit and what is expected of them but are also acknowledged with appreciation and strong recognition when those expectations are achieved. I have witnessed so many associates over many years find that there is nothing worse in life than trying to shoot at an invisible target. A great leader makes sure that every associate is clear on the result expectations of their Role.

It is human nature for people to want to do what is expected of them, if they understand exactly what that is. Recognition for achievement, without a doubt, always reinforces the worth of every individual and results in each associate buying into their job.

Great Leaders create an internal environment where the successful achievement of expected results is constantly rewarded with appreciation and recognition and in contrast, underachievement is dealt with by offering coaching.

Great leaders create a “Recognition Based” organization culture where there is a clear difference between how the “high performers” are appreciated, recognized and rewarded and the “under-performers” are not. If everyone in the organization does not clearly understand and experience a clear difference between successful performance to the agreed upon expectations and what would be considered underperformance within the position, what you get is a much-reduced level of performance and work excellence. When you lower the performance bar by accepting underperformance, you will always end up with an underperforming organization. Great leaders never let that happen.

This is one of the most important statements that will be made in this book: Great Leaders/Managers spend a minimum of 10 % of their time every week personally and proactively calling or physically going around and appreciating the hard work of the team and recognizing the accomplishment of individual results. This is how you create a High Performing “Recognition Based” Organization Culture where job ownership, motivation, and ongoing success flourishes. Two things can then happen within this “recognition based” environment for those people who underperform and are not recognized: They either want to know how they can step it up and become recognized or they make excuses, become uncomfortable and generally weed themselves out.

Senior Leaders should spend most of their time visioning and planning the path the organization will take and less time overseeing the managers and supervisors in assuring the execution of the vision is achieved.

The Senior Leader's participation in the oversight of all plan implementations, however, is critical to the organization's success but must be limited in its nature and scope or the organization will not have an adequate "Strategic Vision" and planning process that produces future growth and financial success.

If the senior leaders spend most of their time micro-managing the execution of plans, then one of three things are very wrong. 1.) You don't have the right people or, 2.) you have not properly distributed and delegated the "result expectation" that will allow all the associates to have a defined role in "getting it done", or 3.) as I witness in many cases, the senior leader simply cannot let go. A great organization culture clearly sets the "result expectations" by distributing clear objectives and new initiatives to each manager, supervisor, and associate in every position. The leader then mentors and supports them by being available for needed guidance, showing confidence in them, appreciating their efforts, recognizing their results and rewarding continued success. The leader also assures that positive coaching is always applied when under-performance occurs and that "appropriate" changes within the organization are made without hesitation when under-performance cannot be fixed.

Manager/Supervisor

Your first role in management is likely to be in a supervisor or mid-level manager position as you experience upward progression through the organization.

The job of the Managers and Supervisors, simply stated, is to produce the desired results for the Leader's vision and plans.

It is especially important to understand that great managers also exercise the qualities and characteristics that are attributed to leadership. You, as a manager of a smaller group, team, department, or process will definitely participate in visionary planning, process flow, streamlined line structuring of activities, communications and team building (culture improvement). The leadership portion of your job, however, will be much less than the that of the leader, especially that of a senior leader.

As a first-time supervisor/ manager all of the day-to-day activities and result expectations for process execution and new initiative implementation fall squarely within your area of responsibility.

The bottom line is that **great leaders** also manage, and **great managers** also lead by applying the principles of leadership to every operation, process, and new initiatives that they have responsibility. When you are discussing the different characteristics of each, in general terms, you tactically “manage” what exists and you strategically “lead” by creating a vision for identifying and advancing new ideas and initiatives to improve the organization’s culture, productivity, growth and financial performance.

Generally, you can divide management/leadership into three levels of progression upward through the organization. We have shown an example below and put some very general ranges of management time vs. leadership time on each.

	<u>Leadership</u>	<u>Management</u>
Initial and First Level Supervisory & Mid-Management Positions	30%	70%
Middle Management Position	60%	40%
Senior Management or Leadership Positions	80-90%	10-20%

You can see, as an associate successfully moves up through supervision and management the leadership skills take on increased importance and the role becomes more strategically connected with the creation of a positive, productive and high performing organizational culture, strategic planning, organization development and structure effectiveness with a very strong focus on growth and productivity with financial results always being the dominant consideration.

By the way, many managers (and even senior leaders) have a difficult time with the transition from being a doer to an effective delegator of “result expectations” to others by supporting lower level managers in the accomplishment of their goals. Great leaders always drive organizational and revenue growth by pushing the tactical execution of plans down to the appropriate supervisor/manager’s level and staying focused on strategic thinking that provides the company the platform for continued growth and financial performance.

You never want an organization to only be as good as what the senior leader can “get their arms around”. You want the organization to be as great as each member of the entire team can be. That is only achieved through associate development, delegation, and the creation of a High Performance “Recognition Based” Organizational Culture.

Career Path Phase III- Plan

Develop your leadership qualities that will be with you as part of each new role you will assume. As we discussed earlier, no matter what level of supervision or management you are promoted to, the basic principles of great leadership should always be adhered to and applied.

The basic qualities always attributed to exceptional leaders at all levels are:

First, you must develop a strong and positive culture within the part of the organization you are responsible for leading. Great lower level supervisors and managers figure out a way to create a positive “sub-culture” even within an organization where the culture is not perfect.

Second, you then apply this engaged, motivated and highly productive organizational culture to effectively manage and advance the assigned operations and new initiatives in the area of the business for which you are responsible.

Action Items for the Great Manager

1. Create a highly motivated, engaged, positive thinking organizational culture within your team where each associate clearly understands and agrees to their individual “result expectations,” objectives and initiatives and takes complete and prideful ownership for meeting those expectations.

Creating a High-Performance Organization Culture, within your area of responsibility, requires a skill set and caring personality that truly likes and enjoys being with and dealing with people and truly believes the associates you supervise are the key to meeting your joint objectives for personal and professional success. Creating the vision and then investing the communications time necessary to align your expectations with the expectations of your team is a critical quality seen in great managers.

Studies all show that these are the qualities that your associates would like to see in a great manager.

A Person who:

- A. Is approachable, likable, and genuinely respects and cares about the people they supervise as individual human beings not just employees.

- B. Always asks for input on all topics that impact their job.
- C. Provides feedback on all questions asked and suggestions made.
- D. Sets clear expectations for the desired results, objectives and initiatives that are jointly agreed upon up front. Consistency. No surprises. No “flavor of the month” approach.
- E. Is understanding and will offer support if there are performance shortfalls due to circumstances outside their control.
- F. Show human respect for everyone in all cases.
- G. Show appreciation for dependability, reliability, hard work and going the extra mile.
- H. Offer formal and informal recognition for the achievement of “result expectations.”
- I. Provides compensation rewards and promotions for those who continuously meet and exceed the clear “result expectations” that are agreed upon.
- K. Provides support, mentorship, education, and training that allows those who want to advance the opportunity to do so. Most people have an interest in understanding what their career path looks like if they meet all their ongoing goals.

Insights: If you do not like dealing with people and becoming a great mentor and coach in order to get the best from every associate, you probably should not go into supervision, management, or leadership. There are many people who are most comfortable and extraordinarily successful being strong “individual contributors” rather than being held responsible for the success of others.

By the way, strong “individual contributors” are the backbone of every organization.

2. **Develop a Management Operating System**—by streamlining the entire flow of activities, processes, and communications within your specific organization structure to assure speed, efficiency, and operational effectiveness. Your chain of command, flow of activities, communications and authorities should be amazingly simple and clear for everyone to understand and operate within. Numbers 3 and 4 (below) are key elements of your Management Operating System (MOS).

3. **Creating the Two Key Communication Loops that promote an effective Management Operating System**

Team Meetings – Great managers meet with their teams at least once per quarter, and ideally every month, to ask them if they have any better ideas on how to improve the flow of communications and processes within their specific areas of responsibility that would eliminate hassle and inefficiencies where they exist. Remember, the people closest to the situation always have the best ideas on how to improve the process. This is a forum where great ideas will emerge.

These regularly scheduled “non-operational” group or department team meetings are also a good place to thank, appreciate and recognize people where it is appropriate.

The goal is to collaborate with your team in creating a positive culture, organization and communication structure that produces exceptional results with very little wasted motion or hassle. The non-operational team meeting is designed to allow every associate to have input into the business, receive feedback on their input and feel a part of the team’s success. The team meetings most always generate job ownership.

4. **Operational Meetings** – In addition to team meetings designed to improve the organization’s culture, structural flow of activities, processes and communications, and show appreciation and recognition to the associates, it is also critical to have a regular schedule (daily, weekly or monthly depending on the process) of operational meetings to vigorously review the status of each associate’s and department’s agreed upon “result expectations”, objectives and new initiatives. This is where the dashboard of “critical success factors” is closely monitored.

It is the objective of every great manager to develop for their team, department, or division a dashboard of “critical success factors” that can be tracked and easily monitored for negative variances to your plan. Your goal, as an effective manager, is to be **“Negative Variance Killer”**. When negative variances to the plan are identified, the focus of great managers is to move in and support the person or team responsible for that variance, to get it back in line. Negative variances are Public Enemy # 1 of great managers, great organizations, and great financial results. The trick is to have all result expectations, objectives and Initiatives of the organization assigned to individual ROLES so that the associate who “owns” the ROLE where the negative variance exists can get ahead of the variance by following the trending and can make solution recommendations in advance for eliminating the possibility of a variance.

When the solution recommendations come before the negative variance occurs, you know your Management Operating System (MOS) is in place and functioning well.

Every associate that is considered “exceptional” clearly understands their ROLE and responsibilities and even more importantly, understands the “result expectations” that have been jointly set and agreed upon and which they will be recognized for achieving.

Insights: **Just for clarification**, every associate of the company should have their specific ROLES and responsibilities clearly outlined so the management expectations for each ROLE are understood and agreed upon by the associate who owns that ROLE. As part of every person's Position Description (or what should instead be called **Performance Agreement**) there should be three mandatory inclusions:

- A. Up to 3 truly clear, specific, and precise result expectations that will be the focus of each person holding each ROLE.
- B. There should be 3-5 objectives that are sub-components of the “result expectations” detailing the quantitative objectives, that must be met in order to achieve the “result expectations.”
- C. There should be 1-3 key initiatives that are important qualitative “changes” that will have to be implemented in order to achieve the current and future objectives that will advance the achievement of the “result expectations.”

These regularly scheduled **Operational Meetings** are to determine one thing and one thing only..... where the negative variances are between the productivity plan or budget that has been broken down into individual ROLE “result expectations” and the actual results being achieved within each associates' ROLE. Once you have set up the system of clearly identifying and agreeing on each associates' ROLE, responsibilities and accountability for “result expectations” you, as the supervisor/manager become a variance hunter offering support to the person who owns the variance in order to eliminate it.

Your primary job as the supervisor/manager is to be vigilant in identifying and supporting the correction of every variance to plan by engaging in a positive but pro-active approach with the individuals or teams who have responsibility for the areas where the negative variances are occurring, in order to correct the variances and bring the expected results back on track.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor/manager to do what it takes to support the correction of the variance to plan with a positive, collaborative solution that is followed up and managed daily until it is fixed.

5. **Fixing “Variances” to Plan**

Sometimes the fixes are easy. Many times, it is an outside vendor or influence that must be fixed, repaired, or changed in order to remove the variance. Often, however, it is a poorly structured process flow or may be the poor performance of a team or team member causing the variance.

Always keep in mind, a positive organizational culture requires, 100% of the time, that poor performance is solved by following your agreed upon core commitment to human respect and the trait of genuinely caring about each individual associate as a person.

An absolute requirement is that every associate on your team, in advance of any potential “variance to plan”, has a clear understanding of the “result expectations” that were discussed, and which are documented in the Position and Performance Agreement.

If the “variance to plan” is due to “associate performance” you must get to the root cause of the problem with a positive, private discussion with the individual or team involved. All your team is watching how the situation is handled. It is particularly important that you have clearly identified the root cause of an associate’s underperformance regarding the agreed

upon “result expectations” that are in place, before you rush to judgement. Human Respect is critical.

After the root cause of a team or team member’s underperformance is clearly understood, you must have adequate discussions with the associates involved to determine if it is:

- A. Not a sufficient skill level or training to perform the work in line with the agreed upon expectations. The person does, however, have a good attitude and work ethic.
- B. A personal issue (temporary or permanent) that has prevented an associate from focusing and performing to their level of skill. This person has a good attitude but has a personal or temporary issue.
- C. A poor work ethic or attitude toward doing the job in accordance with the agreed upon expectations, that cannot be corrected with ongoing mentorship and active coaching.

A&B need more information to support the decision that will lead to removing the “negative variance to plan”.

In the case of “**A**”, if the person’s aptitude and willingness to learn to improve the needed skill set is present, that may be the route you take. You do not want to lose a good person with a positive attitude and strong work ethic. If there is no time, however, to train a person to improve their skills, then I would suggest there be an attempt to move the person to another position within the organization or support them in finding a new position outside of the organization.

There must be an action, one way or the other, to fix the skill set variance but the answer is never just allowing the negative variance to continue.

In the case of “**B**”, it must be determined if the personal issue can be overcome so the negative variance can be removed. If there is support for an individual with a temporary personal issue, where help can be provided to solve their personal issue and fix the variance, all is good. If the personal issue cannot be resolved to allow acceptable performance to occur in their existing role, but they are a good person with a positive attitude and strong work ethic, it again should be determined if a different internal position would allow the associate’s personal issue to be resolved. If that move to a different internal position is not possible, we will support the individual in finding an outside role that would potentially solve the associate’s problems. Again, the answer is **never** to continue to experience the negative variance to plan but to make the necessary changes, positive if at all possible, from the associate’s viewpoint. Remember, everyone in your culture is watching how you handle these difficult situations and putting themselves in that position.

The removal of the “negative variances” in both “**A**” and “**B**” situations is, ultimately, in the best interest of everyone in the organization as it relates to maintaining both the company’s financial strength and each individual’s job security.

In the case of “**C**”, there has been a poor attitude and/or work ethic demonstrated resulting in sub-standard performance. If proper coaching and encouragement does not modify the poor attitude or work ethic over a reasonable period, following the proper Performance Improvement Process, the person should be transitioned out of the organization in a respectful manner.

Insights for Creating a High-Performance Organization Culture

It is extremely important in achieving the status of a Great Manager or Leader to create a positive high performing, highly motivated, highly productive organizational culture. The most destructive action you can take with a prideful associate group within a high performing organization is to allow non-performing people to continue. If there is not a big difference between how you treat mediocrity vs. how well you treat and recognize high performers, **guess what you get?** Mediocrity that is willfully tolerated lowers the performance bar and sends a message to everyone in the organization that no matter how hard you work and how well you achieve your objectives, you will be treated the same way as a low performer who does not have adequate training or demonstrates a poor attitude or work ethic. This simply does not happen in a great organization with GREAT LEADERS.

There must be ZERO tolerance for associates who willingly underperform because the overall environment and performance bar will sink to the level of those mediocre performers. The good people will leave. Some people will slip to the accepted level of underperformance and the real poor performers will stay because their low standard of performance has now been accepted as the norm.

It is critically important to always be fair and willing to work with, mentor and coach those who want to correct poor performance and be productive associates. When it becomes necessary, however, to professionally transition a person out of the organization, do not waste time doing it. It is generally the case that when you finally separate from a poor

performing associate, everyone wants to know what took you so long. Most of your associates already know who are the good people that they want to work with and those that bring them down. Good associates do not want to work with people who have negative attitudes and poor work habits. Good associates also do not want to work with people who have no core values.

Good associates want to meet the expectations of their supervisor. That is just human nature. They want to take pride in what they do and be appreciated and recognized for accomplishments. Supervisors, managers, and leaders can never cheat their good associates out of the positive environment they deserve by supporting any level of mediocrity.

One final but very critical insight regarding the process of terminating a poor performing associate. The philosophical message you need to communicate to the entire organization when a termination occurs should indicate and demonstrate that “all the people who work in the organization are highly valued as individuals”. Indicate that the top priority of all supervisors, managers and senior leaders is to create a positive and respectful working environment. The goal is to always provide a safe and secure position and an upward career path for all associates who demonstrate pride in their work and care about their fellow team members and the success of the organization. This will always be the top priority. Those associates who have not responded to support and who still continue to demonstrate poor performance, a poor attitude and/or lack of work ethic or interest in their team of associates or the organization will be invited to work elsewhere.

All supervisors, managers and leaders are judged by the way they dismiss an associate. No matter what the situation it must be done with respect. You do not want to make a poor performing associate that was rightfully dismissed a martyr by being insensitive to a person

who just lost their job. For just a moment, everyone puts themselves in that person's position and judges you on how they were treated.

Following the dismissal of an employee, it should be made clear to everyone that they belong to an elite organization who strongly supports and cares about each associate. If you care about your high performing associates you will not tolerate associates who believe in mediocrity and sub-par performance.

Just one more thing....

History would reveal that every major success within an organization, whether it's a new project or initiative or even just maintaining existing processes and activities at a high level of performance, there is always a "project owner" who places their focus, heart and commitment on achieving success. If you see an organization where every associate "owns" their own ROLE, you have just spotted a successful business.

There is a mistake that is often made by management. That mistake is taking a successful employee and having them "own" too many activities. Rather than to bring other lower performing associates up to speed, there is a tendency to spread good people too thin.

Just remember that when an associate is successful when investing 100% of their focus on the ownership of their one role, if you give that person another major activity to "own", their focus is not just cut in half to 50% for each activity but generally their focus is cut to 30% on each because a large portion of their total focus is wastefully eaten up by moving their mind set and passion back and forth between activities. The numbers might not be exact, but the reduction of focus and the resulting reduction of Results decreases disproportionately by some percentage.

When it appears to be easier to assign an important activity to a currently successful associate, I would suggest that you first look around and consider improving the performance of another associate and then giving them the chance. When you are finished you end up with two high-performing associates.

A general complaint from leadership is that they do not have or cannot find enough “A” players to manage all the key roles in their organizations. That is why they spread good people too thin. I leave you with the thought that I have witnessed for over a half century in all types of organizations that there is a lot of “A” in a lot of associates who are under utilized. I encourage leaders to first, bring the “A” performance out of every associate possible by providing clear expectations, clear roles and responsibilities, initial training, and on-going support. Most importantly create a “Recognition Based Culture” where everyone is appreciated for hard work and recognized for meeting clear “result expectations” and then rewarded and promoted for continued high performance. It is always so much better to develop a new “A” player than it is to spread an existing “A” player too thin and reduce their ability to perform. The more “A” players you develop the more successful the entire organization will be. Great leaders have the ability to bring the “A” out of a lot of people who were written off. You never want an organization to only be as good as what the Senior Leader can get their arms around. The more great players, the lighter the work and the better the results.

One absolute truth I have discovered over the years is that human nature itself drives most everyone to want to do what is reasonably expected of them, if they in fact understand what that is. Even though many supervisors, managers and even senior leaders think they have been clear on the “expectations” there are many situations where that is not the case. Making

certain that associates clearly understand the “expectations” you have for them and then recognizing them when those expectations are met or exceeded is a “for sure way” of bringing the “A” performance to the surface.

Different approaches to making your way to the top of the organization.

There are two paths that we will call “ladders” to progress through the ranks to a senior leadership role within an organization.... if in fact you actually have a desire to move through supervision and management and on to leadership. Many people prefer to be “individual performers” in a certain technology, trade, skill set or position they really enjoy and avoid the headaches of managing people and the additional leadership pressures and challenges that come with being responsible for others performance.

That is fine because the “individual performers” represent the backbone of an organization’s work force.

The two educational “starting points” for ultimately securing a senior leadership position are:

1. Completing a formal and/or advanced education from a prestigious college which in many cases will allow person to enter the organization on a faster track and start at a higher rung on the organizational ladder, than a person who has a less formal education or attends a less prestigious school.
2. Being a person who enters the organization at a non-degreed entry level position will start on a lower rung of the organization ladder.

The ultimate reality is, however, no matter what level or rung on the ladder you enter the organization, those who have a desire to do so, will progress to senior leadership based solely on the consistent high performance they demonstrate and the results they achieve.

Ideas you may consider after you have performed successfully in the role of Associate, Supervisor or Manager.

Whenever there is a position opening that would represent a promotion for which you consider yourself qualified, you should professionally and confidentially explore the opportunity with your supervisor and then HR. Ask to be considered and then after the interview, if you are not selected, go to HR and the person who made the decision and respectfully ask what you can do going forward to prepare yourself for a similar opportunity in the future. Always be appreciative for the opportunity to interview for a promotion and always be professional in seeking guidance as it relates to the training or development needed to be considered for a future position.

If another opportunity comes along outside the organization that is better in all regards than your current position; or an opportunity to start your own business comes along, you should study the pros and cons, ask for advice from people you trust and then move toward the outside advancement opportunity with great enthusiasm and don't look back.

Chapter V

Pulling it all together

“For those that want to Stay Ahead of the Pack”

Balancing your family time, faith beliefs and career in order to achieve a purposeful, holistic, and satisfying future is the purpose for creating a strong financial platform where you have the resources to enjoy the well-deserved activities of a good life.

Everyone, with no exceptions, at any point in their life can create a “decision point” for change.

If your current life situation is good, your challenge should be to build upon it. The goals of the people in my generation were to always work hard so our children would have an even greater opportunity to succeed and enjoy an even better life than we enjoyed.

If you were born into a less fortunate situation, it is not your fault. It is your responsibility, however, to develop a *Strategic Life Plan* designed to move you out of a bad situation into a good situation that will allow you to achieve your life’s vision, goals, and dreams.

No matter what the situation, good or not so good, you should never ever think or say you cannot improve it..... because you can if you make a commitment to yourself to do so.

It is always an easier path with much less resistance not to make the strategic changes required in life that would allow you to meet your personal goals and achieve your future dreams. It can in fact be difficult at the outset. Remember, the decision is yours and yours alone. If you choose to develop a *Strategic Life Plan*, things can be difficult through the “change period”. The results, however, will last for the rest of your life and will positively impact you, your family and all the people around you.

All of us enter this “strategic decision point” from a different place in life. For some the “decision point” to establish a *Strategic Life Plan* begins in high school, trade school or college with a goal to create a path that will lead to financial success and a meaningful and balanced life.

For some, there are no current financial pressures or even personal or social pressures, but just a pure interest in setting the ultimate path of your Strategic Life in a direction that will always bring personal satisfaction and will be a lasting and positive influence on your family and friends.

For many years young people who are blessed with great athletic skills or significant intelligence, sought to change their lives by pursuing sports or academic scholarships as the way to escape a bad situation or just improve their lives in general by seeking an advanced education to establish a strong financial platform.

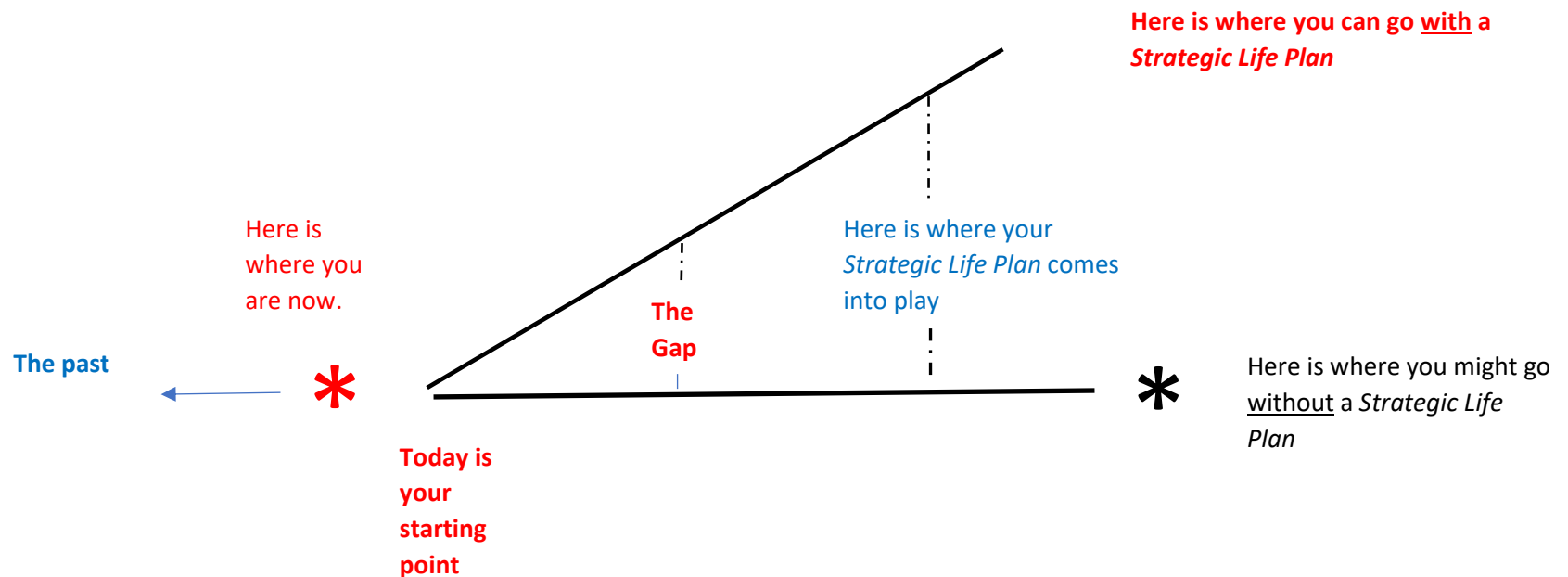
Many of us, unfortunately, are not gifted with the levels of athletic skill or intelligence to gain scholarships to college that could launch us into a good career. This *Strategic Life Plan* will launch you into a successful career and financial platform with or without a prestigious or advanced education. Again, it is very important to accept that no matter what position in life you are currently in, you can develop a *Strategic Life Plan* to build a strong financial platform that will elevate your opportunities and provide the resources to live a purposeful life that positively impacts your own dreams and the dreams of your family and the people around you.

Decision Time and the Truths that must be understood

If you accept the need to establish a personal *Strategic Life Plan* that will provide focus on utilizing your work skills and personal qualities and characteristics to build your financial platform, there is still one more **Absolute Requirement in Life** that needs to be discussed in order to Pull it All Together.

From the “Decision Point” where you lay out your *Strategic Life Plan* and focus on achieving a strong financial platform that directs your future, it was never intended that 100% of your focus be devoted to that cause only. Abandoning any of the other significant parts of your entire life, that must be in place to achieve the dreams of your life, will never work. Your faith beliefs, spouse, family, and friends represent the core support system for all your personal and professional growth and will always and forever be the critical parts of your *Strategic Life Plan*.

At the beginning, in Chapter 1 when we established the “Decision Point” and direction we want our *Strategic Life Plan* to lead we looked at this graphic:



We can see the **Gap** that shows a significant contrast between doing “nothing different” and that of creating your personalized *Strategic Life Plan*. Within this **Gap** we began focusing on the development of a *Strategic Life Plan* that starts with the process by building a strong financial platform for the accomplishments of your life’s dreams and goals.

It is important to go back to this graphic and understand the **Gap** between not doing anything different and creating a *Strategic Life Plan* has several other critical activities that make the achievement of your life, dreams, and goals possible.

First and foremost, like it or not, if you are going to create a positive future for you and your family on earth, you have to look beyond your time on earth and make sure you have a strong faith belief system. This partnership with your faith beliefs is absolutely necessary with every step you take in order to receive the strength, unconditional love and endurance you will need for your earthly journey and also the eternal reward you will receive at the completion of your journey on earth. Always stay in daily contact with your faith, to both express appreciation for what you have been given and to ask for help and guidance in what you want and need to achieve your goals while you are here on earth. Be very humble as you expand your relationships in this life and always remember that seeking the truth found in your faith will set you free from worry and anxiety.

Keep this old concept in mind as your life evolves: Always hold on tight to the tether line that connects you to your all-important faith beliefs. The tether is only so long and if you drift to far you will lose the ability to pull yourself back to the real purpose for which you are here. Think about this every day as you move along your *Strategic Life Plan*.

Second, while you are on Earth, again like it or not, you have a major impact on the lives of your spouse, children, extended family members and friends. Your commitment to these people during every phase of your life is part of the major responsibility you have as you achieve and live a “purposeful life” and a key reason you will pursue a *Strategic Life Plan*.

Always remember you only have so many hours every day...

One third of that day is sleep time, one third or more is work and career development time and one third is personal time. Within your *Strategic Life Plan*, you must commit to and prioritize a plan for the six to eight hours per day of your personal time. Your faith, spouse, family, friends, and self-interest are all a part of your personal time. Be certain that you prioritize this personal time to meet all the non-career goals you have set in your *Strategic Life Plan*. If your faith beliefs and family do not have a prominent portion of this available personal time, no other goals and dreams can be successfully achieved. Always remember that as a successful person and, ultimately a great leader, you have a responsibility to support your loved ones in achieving their goals in life.

Third – Your positive and likable personality will draw many people into friendships. Some are business relationships, and some are long term personal relationships. Again, like it or not, the relationships and connections you make at all levels will be as a result of your personal characteristics and qualities. Make it your life’s work to positively encourage those who are influenced by your words and actions.

It is always easy to love your friends, that comes naturally, it is challenging at times to love or even tolerate your enemies. Considering that there are those acquaintances you have in life that you do not consider friends, or even don’t care to associate with, I would suggest that rather than get back at them or put them down, just simply ignore them. If you love your friends who are lovable and simply ignore your acquaintances who are not, you will have fulfilled one of the critical requirements of your *Strategic Life Plan*.... never ever burn bridges but instead build them.

Conclusion

Creating and following a *Strategic Life Plan* is not something you decide to do on a whim. It should not be like a New Year's resolution, but instead a lifelong decision that becomes a stake in the ground that will guide your thoughts, decisions, actions and ultimately your destiny from this moment on. Think hard about this lifelong commitment. Once you make it, you do not ever want to go back.

There are two parts to your commitment to a *Strategic Life Plan* that must be made and committed to in order to succeed in its achievement.

- I You must make the choice to pursue this strategic path, understanding that there will be on-going challenges. It is critical that you are willing to embrace change . . . because there will be some changes required to your current way of doing things. Comfort and Growth never go together...if you are comfortable there is little pressure to expand yourself and grow. You must ask and then answer to yourself; Are you comfortable enough to stay where you are forever, or do you see yourself achieving more? If it is the later, every day you wait will make it a day later that you reach the vision of what YOU want YOU to be.
- II Develop and totally commit to your *Strategic Life Plan*, never letting any obstacles stand in the way of your progress. Always stay true to your commitment and I can assure you it will both come true and come back to you tenfold.

Remember, you are in total control of your thoughts, which in turn totally control your decisions, which then go on to control your actions that will result in the total control of your own future destiny. All you must do in order to get off on the right foot is commit to the “thoughts” that will begin to build the platform for your *Strategic Life Plan*. What do you want YOU to look like? Remember, if you are not “*Staying ahead of the pack*” the view is miserable.

ADDEMDUM I

RE: Estimated Household Budget when you begin your first “real” job.

Average Monthly Estimate

1. **Apartment Rental.** This depends on if you have a roommate splitting the cost or are living alone. Also depends on where your apartment is located. The monthly rentals are between \$650 and \$1200 for a decent apartment. Split it if you have a roommate. There is no property tax when you rent. Usually water is also included. If you have a condo or a house there will be property taxes and there may also be a monthly fee for HOA. That usually includes maintenance of the common areas and sometimes cable.

\$900.00/mo.
2. **Apartment Utilities.** i.e. Power

\$85.00/mo.
3. **Car Payment.** Leases are less than purchases. Leases can be \$250 per month. Purchases could be \$650 per month.

\$300.00 / lease

4. **Car Insurance.** Varies based on driving record. A safe driver's rate on a smaller car is probably around. \$150.00/mo.

5. **Apartment Insurance.** Many young people do not get this until they accumulate a lot of valuables. \$25.00/mo.

6. **Cable and Internet.** There are all kinds of plans. The most cost-effective plans include streaming like YouTube TV (\$50.00 per mo.) with a base internet package of around \$50.00 per mo. \$100.00/mo.

7. **Telephone and Data.** Again, there re many plans. If you are not leasing or buying a phone as part of your plan. If you are buying a phone on the plan add that number on monthly. \$100.00/mo.

8. **Car maintenance, gas & oil.** On a smaller, newer car if you are not traveling a lot. Also does not include a car or lease payment if you have one. You should set aside a few dollars each month for when there is a need for maintenance or tires. \$150.00/mo.

9. **Medical Insurance.** Depends on if your employer covers you. If you get full employee medical insurance coverage, you may only pay \$500.00/mo. If you get “safety net” insurance with large deductibles, which most young people do, it can be \$120.00/mo. \$120.00/mo.

10. **Food and Restaurants.** Most young people eat out a lot. Restaurants and bars can represent a large monthly expense if not watched closely. \$350.00/mo.

11. **Entertainment, miscellaneous odds and ends.** Must also be controlled \$200.00/mo.

Total average monthly estimate \$2,480.00/mo.

Annually your average estimated expenses, considering the range of expenses we considered should be around. It is important that you check to see what your actual expenses are based on you specific situation. \$29,760.00

Estimated take home under this scenario \$30,420.00

NOTE: Keep in mind that depending on where you live you must deduct from your gross payroll around 22%-30% for payroll tax and city, state, and federal income tax. If you make **\$39,000** your take-home is roughly **\$30,420** (using a 22% total payroll and income tax rate) annually or \$715.00 monthly.

<u>In this example</u>	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Annually</u>
Gross Pay	\$3,250.00	\$39,000.00
After Taxes at 22% leaving net pay at	\$2,535.00	\$30,420.00
Projected Expenses	\$2,480.00	\$29,760.00

Summary

To experience the projected expenses in your estimated household budget and pay taxes you need to be around a gross annual salary of \$39,000.00

ADDEMDUM II

Pursuing Business Development (Sales) as a Career Path

If you are planning a career-path that will take you into New Business Development (Sales), Phase I and II of your *Strategic Life Plan* will remain as the same priority but in addition, I have provided **Addendum II** containing the general absolutes for people who wish to be successful in Sales Territory Management and then go on to rise through the sales ranks into sales management and leadership.

If you desire and have the opportunity to move into sales management, most of the topics covered in Career Path Phase III of your *Strategic Life Plan* will apply to, and support, sales management, and leadership.

This **Addendum II** is designed to support you in Phase I and Phase II at the beginning of your sales career. The plan is simple, but it takes a lot of persistent effort to successfully execute.

First and foremost, it is important to be a person who has a natural outreaching personality that enjoys conversing with people and is not bothered at all by the rejection of your proposals that you will encounter as part of a sales position. Any and all forms of rejection do come often. The best new business development professionals in the business usually average around a 35-40% success rate in selling their product or service. That means if you are among the best 60-65% of your prospect proposals will still, ultimately, be rejected. That is okay, because if your selling relationships are built properly and your proposals are based on truth and fact; rejection should never be considered personal but a normal part of the Business Development Process which is your ability to fit your product and service solutions into the needs and requirements of your prospective customers.

After being very close to the New Business Development Process for over 50 years, I can, without hesitation, outline for you the qualities and characteristics that have always been present in highly successful business development professionals that function in the sales role as territory, district, regional or national accounts managers that are focused on the direct selling process.

Traits commonly found in highly successful business development professionals.

Sales Tactics and Strategies

Preparing to be an effective Sales Representative

1. Be educated on the product or service solution that you are selling at the same level or better than the primary buying influence that you will be calling on.
 - A. Take and absorb as much product and sales training available to you.
 - B. Have multiple conversations with the salespeople who are in your same role to better understand what the customer and prospective buying influences that you will be calling on require, expect, and want from your company's sales representatives. Try to always shadow the company's most successful salesperson to observe what works and what does not work. It is good that you should develop your own style of selling that fits with who you are, but it is always helpful to observe others, so you have data points as you create your own selling style.
2. This is very important. As part of your training, internal discussions, and on-the-job training, try to achieve a full and complete understanding of your product or service's solution "differentiation" with the competitive offerings in your specific market area. Having a complete understanding of what makes your product and service solution "different" than your competitors is a critical starting point for successfully developing your presentation messaging.

2

3. Make certain you have, and completely understand, all of the sales and presentation tools and website tools that are available to you and that you will need in order to authenticate your product and service differentiation. Be able to prove the claims of differentiation by having the ability to demonstrate it to your customer prospects if at all possible.
4. What we have been talking about, up to now, is your all-important personal preparation prior to the organization of your geographic sales territory and the execution of your sales visit plan.

The execution phase of your market identification and penetration strategy

5. **Break out the current customers, and prospects in three segmented categories.**

- A. **The Maintenance Customers**—Create a list of customers where your company has already earned nearly all the business, but who need to be kept abreast of new product or service solutions and provided with an exceptional industry leading “customer satisfaction program.”

You never want to have to replace a good customer due to poor service and customer dissatisfaction. That is, however, only a small part of your role as a “New Business Development” Territory Manager.

Most of the inside sales, customer service, tech support and the assurance of customer satisfaction should be generated and pro-actively promoted and managed by an internal customer service or inside sales and service team. ³

Your valuable time as an outside new business development person should not be spent on current customers where your company already holds the business. Only about **10% of your time** should be devoted to stepping in and touching base with Maintenance Customers unless there is a crisis of some sort that requires additional time or a new

opportunity that has come along to introduce a new product or service your company now has to offer. The vast majority of your assigned Maintenance Customers should feel their internal support team is excellent and are satisfied with them as their primary source of information.

The sales strategy goal for Maintenance Customers is achieving world class customer satisfaction, as rated by the customer, primarily deployed by inside resources. The objective is to always retain the customer and be rated by them as “their” best supplier.

- B. **The Targeted Maintenance Customers**--The next category of customer is the customer who is doing some business with your company but still offers a lot of opportunity for additional business. I classify these customers as Targeted Maintenance customers. They currently do business with you but have the ability within the same facility, division, or corporation to do more business, sometimes much more business. You can consider these customers as low hanging fruit.

Along with the previously stated “customer satisfaction strategy” that is internally employed with all current Maintenance Customers, you also apply a Reference Strategy, with Target Maintenance Customers which is intended to use your current good reputation to identify additional contacts with the intent of adding additional business within the global organization.

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Considering the customer is currently and successfully applying your “differentiated” product or service solution to a specific need, somewhere within their organization, it would stand to reason that the same customer need may exist somewhere else throughout the customer’s entire corporation in other departments or plant locations.

Securing positive references within your existing customers that would help you meet and attempt to sell other buying influences within their corporation would be considered a Reference Strategy. **30-40%** of a highly successful new business development professional's time should be spent with Target Maintenance Customers. Your primary focus should be with the Top 10 Target Maintenance Customers in your territory.

- C. Target Customers--This next category of customers in your territory are called Target Customers.

These customers do not currently do business with your company. These are the customers who are actively doing business with your competitors. This is where you must pull out all your best work to first secure an appointment and then generate interest. The strategy used with Target Customers is called the Penetration Strategy. The process of developing new business with a Target Customer generally is the most difficult with a longer selling cycle but has a great deal of value to the company and to you when you successfully land this size of potential new business.

Prioritization of Targeted Customers

- > Target Customers are prioritized by the “**potential sales**” they can provide your company.
 - > The Top 10 Target Customers is where you would place **50-60% of your focus**.
6. **Identifying all of your Territory Customers** who you list and place into these three categories should be done first, if it is not already available to you. Knowing the SIC codes (Standard Industrial Classification) of the existing customers will help you identify new target customers within your

territory who more than likely have the same product and service requirements. Use whatever services and database resources available to identify 100% of the available Target Customers within your geographic sales territory market.

7. **Develop your personal sales capacity for your specific geographical territory.**

It is critical, based on the size of your geographic territory and the density of your current and targeted customers, to commit to the number of in-person and on-site sales visits you will make within your sales territory. (*Trade Shows do not count*).

The number of sales visits you commit to:

- A. A rough formula is that you should plan on committing to 44 net selling weeks per year after personal days, holidays, trade shows and training.
- B. During those 44 net selling weeks, if your geographic territory will allow, it would be normal to make five sales visits to individual customer facilities each selling week. That would amount to roughly 220 in-person sales visits to a customer facility or campus per year. My experience and history would indicate that highly successful sales professionals make between 200 and 250 in-person sales visits per year, when selling proprietary or engineered type products and between 400-500 sales visits per year when selling commodity type products in high customer density territories.

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Note- With the advent of effective new video conferencing methods (i.e.: Zoom, Teams, etc.), a one-on-one teleconference can be substituted for a personal sales visit when necessary.

8. **Your personal Sales Capacity Allocation**

Put together a general plan for dividing up your sales visits between the three customer categories of Maintenance, Target Maintenance and Target customers.

Based on an annual estimated 220 in-person sales visits to customer facilities, here is a rough estimate of how you divide up your selling capacity.

<u>Customer Category</u>	<u>% of sales</u>	<u>Number of Annual Sales Visits</u>
Maintenance Customers	10%	22
Target Maintenance Customers	30-40%	68-88
Target Customers	60-70%	132-154

9. Territory Prioritization, Travel and Time Management

What generally drives your week-to-week schedule of priorities within a geographic segment of your sales territory should “ideally” be as follows. (*Understand that unforeseen emergencies and big opportunities can re-prioritize everything*)

- A. A confirmed appointment with a Top 10 Target Customer or Top 10 Target Maintenance Customer, which generally occurs several weeks in advance, is the driver to you setting sales visits in a geographic segment of your territory. A call back from a prospect to review your proposal/quote would also be an equally high driver that would prioritize your time in a specific area of your territory.
- B. After you plan the visit to a specific geographic segment of your territory to visit a Top 10 Target of Target Maintenance Customer or follow up on an earlier quote, you then fill in

travels with visits to Maintenance Customers in that area and other Target Maintenance Customers, to fill up your sales capacity for that period.

- C. It is generally the most difficult to get a confirmed appointment with a Target Customer. If you get one, go meet them. In most cases the second level of difficulty is to get an appointment with a Target Maintenance Customer who is in a different location and separated from your primary Maintenance Customer location.
- D. In theory, it is easiest to get an appointment with a Maintenance Customer where you have established relations at their primary sales location.

Sales capacity prioritization within your geographic territory that drives your selling schedule.

Priority 1 - Confirmed appointment with a Top 10 Target Customer or a customer request to follow up on a previous proposal/quote.

Priority 2- Confirmed Top 10 Target Maintenance Customer at a location where you do not currently do business.

Priority 3- Lower than Top10 Target or Target Maintenance Customers where we can set a meeting because we are already in the area.

Priority 4 - Maintenance Customers who are in the area.

10. Track all official quotes/proposals.

Wherever there is a legitimate customer request to provide a quote or proposal, do so and track and follow up the quote/proposal with intensity.

An Example Tracking and Follow-up System would look like this:

Date	Customer	Product Service Proposed	Initial Quote Value in \$	% Probability	Estimated Time to close 30 days	60 days	Beyond 60 days
TOTAL			\$ _____	_____ Avg. overall	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____

A Summary of the critical processes performed by successful Business Development Professionals.

1. Know your product or service’s competitive solution “differentiation” and have the sales and presentation tools available to properly promote and demonstrate that differentiation. Have your messaging down pat for every potential application.
2. Identify and categorize every customer and prospect in your geographic sales territory into the three primary categories i.e.: Maintenance, Target Maintenance and Target.
3. Develop your personal sales capacity.

4. Apply your sales capacity with a prioritized approach within your territory management system.
5. Track, follow up and update all your legitimate customer requests for a quote/proposal.