

The Total Leader®



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Establish Clear Priorities to Succeed

Successful people set goals, and they make certain all their actions and activities contribute to the achievement of their goals. They take action in a logical, reasonable, and organized manner to attain the results they have identified as important to them. Successful people increase their productivity through controlling their priorities.

What Are Your Priorities?

You are a complex, unique individual. Part of your complexity stems from the fact that you fill many roles in life and possess numerous needs and desires that grow out of your unique potential. Your needs and desires are best fulfilled by using your potential to be as productive as possible in your business pursuits. However, you will be more productive over a long period of time and find greater satisfaction in your accomplishments when you establish priorities in all six areas of life: financial and career, physical and health, family and home, mental and educational, spiritual and ethical, and social and cultural.

Enhance your productivity and your enjoyment of life by keeping all areas of your personal and business life in proper perspective and by setting pri-

orities in each one:

- ◆ *Financial and Career.* Exercise the same careful watch over your personal financial affairs as you demand in your business. Consider the effect of finances on your ultimate career goals and priorities.
- ◆ *Physical and Health.* Successful people take care of themselves physically; they know a healthy body supports an active and creative mind and turns stress into a motivating force for achievement. Set a high priority on eating nutritious meals, exercising, and getting enough rest to be as productive as possible.



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◆ *Family and Home.* Make your family and home life more rewarding by giving to it some of the energy you save through better organization at work. Spend quality time to maintain meaningful relationships with all members of the family. Exhibit the same caring for them that you do for the members of your team at work.

◆ *Mental and Educational.* Continue to grow in knowledge of your

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career field and knowledge of the world in general. Read something every day that stimulates you to think about important ideas.

- ◆ *Spiritual and Ethical.* Give attention to becoming the kind of person you want to be and to the values you want to demonstrate in your life. Give back to others some of the rewards and blessings of life that have been yours. Find some cause greater than yourself and support it with your time, money, and influence.
- ◆ *Social and Cultural.* Your relationships with people make life worthwhile. Develop a broad circle of friends with whom you have mutual interests. Remember also that the most successful people know how to get along well with others. In addition, they enrich their own lives and the lives of others by participating in cultural activities.

Your God-given potential gives you the right and responsibility to choose goals and set priorities in all areas of your life. No one else knows which goals are most appropriate for you, and no one else should dictate your priorities. The influence of your actions on other people should, of course, be considered when you set goals. But you alone are personally responsible for your life and what you do with it. You lose control over what happens to you if you allow decisions to be made for you by someone else. Make a commitment now to yourself and your future to take charge of your life and to establish priorities that will enrich your life and the lives of those around you.

Establishing priorities saves time, trouble, and effort. Life is a constant process of decision making. In the course of picking and choosing among options, you may have to select from several positive alternatives. At times, you may be forced to choose between two circumstances, both of which are less satisfactory than you desire. At other times, a choice may involve setting a timetable or allotting a reasonable portion of your time to each of several goals. In other words, priorities involve more than merely “doing first things first.” You may find in some situations it is impossible to take the most important action first because intermediate steps must be accomplished before the most important objectives can become reality. You may, for example, aspire to a certain position in your current organization. Before you can reach that goal, you must acquire certain skills, knowledge, and experience. These lesser steps must assume a high priority that leads to your ultimate goal.

Sometimes there is simply no easy choice. But identifying goals and establishing priorities enable you to make the

best choice possible in every situation. A well-thought-out list of priorities helps you to overcome conflicts in advance. Priorities give you a sense of direction when it is time to determine where you want to go next. When a decision-making situation arises, you know more quickly and more clearly what the decision must be because you already know which of the alternatives has the highest priority.

Another important principle applicable to priorities is that they must reflect your goals. Never establish priorities to reflect what you think others want to see. Priorities must be your priorities; otherwise, they will not be “priorities” at all. When you set goals and establish priorities, you maximize your strengths and bring out the best within you. You avoid allowing what others think or do to influence you inappropriately. Comparing your achievements with those of others is, after all, irrelevant. The public notice of accomplishments says nothing about their value. What others think about your accomplishments does not count. The real question is whether you have achieved what you want to achieve – whether you have used a worthy portion of the full potential within you.

Achieving many of your personal goals depends upon your success in achieving challenging goals in your career and business life. Reaching many of your personal goals requires money, and success in your career enables you to earn that money. The satisfaction of your personal needs, in many instances, bears a direct relationship to excellence in your career. Because you spend more of your waking hours on the job than in any other activity, it is natural to expect to satisfy many of your basic needs in that setting. Your personal needs and your business goals are inseparably related.

Even though some of your business goals involve your personal activity and productivity, many of them will be goals of the overall organizational team – goals that are meaningful to you and the entire organization. To enjoy the desired sense of accomplishment in your job, you must identify ways to contribute to the organization’s goals that also meet your need for achievement and success.

Once priorities are determined, you will be able to picture the desired results so vividly that you know how it will feel when they are achieved. With such clear pictures, the result is comparable to that obtained with a camera or with a telescope that is precisely in focus. When your camera lens is focused, the resulting picture is distinct and life-like. When you have a clear-cut mental picture of the results you desire, you are able to move confidently toward them. As a result, you enjoy the rewards of a balanced and productive life.

Celebrate the Successes

Allow your creativity and imagination free rein in planning for a celebration of goals achieved. Reward yourself and your team. Like you, your team members invest a majority of their time and their lives to the organization. Celebrating group success satisfies important social and emotional human needs. Without celebration, team members feel unneeded, unappreciated, and neglected.

When those in your work team – individually or as a group – perform well, make sure they receive both private and public credit for work well done. Nothing establishes your position as a leader quite so effectively as giving praise for success and credit for work accomplished well and on schedule.

Remember: communication, action, time efficiency, and results multiply as the team shares a commitment to exciting productivity goals. The never-ending process of maximizing productivity is the key to the success of your organization.

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Hold Your Team Accountable

Definite, clearly communicated expectations form the basis of accountability. Employees should be educated about company policies and expected to honor them. The first step in educating employees is to provide a written employee manual. If your organization does not have one, consider producing one in your department or division. Address the problems you encounter most often. Make the policies clear and concise. Use plain language to state requirements and corresponding consequences for infractions.

As you plan policy, discuss the provisions with the person you report to and with the personnel department; discuss them with group leaders in your work force or, if yours is a small work group, with all your team members at a group meeting. Consider incorporating their suggestions. When you have drafted the policy, ask the person you report to for additional suggestions for improvement. Distribute the policy in its final form to all team members at a group meeting; explain it and answer any questions. Even if employees are not in total agreement with the policy, they are more likely to respect it if you give them an opportunity to express themselves and you answer their questions.

The second step of accountability is to enforce expectations consistently. If employees discover that one portion of the company handbook is generally ignored, they tend to ignore the rest of it as well. Company standards should be established to meet specific organizational goals. Any standard that meets that test is important enough to be enforced.

Procedures for dealing with infractions should be defined and described in the handbook, and employees should know, within broad limits, what to expect in case of a violation. Consequences should correspond to the seriousness of the offense, and may become more strict with repeated offenses.

Enforce expectations consistently. The certainty of consequences is more important than the severity. It is obviously true that people are not equal in all respects and that you cannot always treat unequal people equally. But the one case in which you must always treat everyone equally is in the enforcing of your organization's expectations.

Problems and actions taken should be recorded on the employee's information sheet that you keep for your own use – not for a permanent personnel file. Offenses, warnings, and corrective actions with the date upon which they occurred are important parts of this record. Because discipline is "training," consider this sheet a record of the employee's training for productivity. This sheet can also be helpful to you as you prepare for conducting the individual's performance review. Only repeated serious disciplinary problems should ever become a permanent record.

When employees know what is expected of them, have a general idea of the consequences, and can depend upon consistency in enforcement, they most likely will try to live up to established performance and behavior expectations. Since people are human, however, a team member will occasionally fail to meet organizational standards. Your job is to check facts and take appropriate action. When team members know they will be held accountable for their action, and getting the job done, they generally will do it. Your job is to make sure it happens. That is accountability.



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Picture Your Success to Make It Happen

A dilemma you may encounter in the process of using affirmation as a tool for developing personal leadership is the difficulty experienced in accepting an affirmation as a statement of reality when you know that it is not – as of yet – true. At this point, the art of visualization enables you to move from the area of dreams into the light of reality. A large percentage of patterns of thought are geared to sight. The simplest thought usually calls forth an image. If someone mentions a tree, you will “see” a tree, but mention of an abstract concept, such as justice, requires your mind to grapple with the idea until somehow you reduce the abstraction to a mental picture. If you are unable to form a picture, you may be confused and fail to understand.

If you hear the word “automobile,” you quickly picture one; but it is probably rather hazy. If you are then asked to describe the automobile you pictured, you must refocus your mental image because you did not know in the beginning what to expect. When you have focused your mental picture clearly enough to describe that car, it is probably your own. That is the way most of us respond to the little events in life.

Visualization is restricted to what we already know – to the familiar and commonplace. We forget that we are free to use imagination, the spice that adds meaning and zest to visualization.

Visualization is used to the best advantage when you learn to use it in its highest form, that of relating the present to the future. When you can, through visualization, relate the “what is” to the “what can be,” you have developed visualization into a genuine art. Visualization proves that you can create anything you conceive. You learn by the process of visualization to move the future into the present – to expand your own experience. You have the jump on tomorrow. You are prepared for it because you are already familiar with it. You have “seen” it through visualization.

When you free your imagination and visualize your goals with controlled attention and concentrated energy, you begin to see some startling results.

◆ Visualization changes a general idea into something more specific. Your mental camera is brought into focus. Your dream home takes shape and is transformed from a confused blur into a crystal clear image. It is so real that you can see the roses blooming in the garden. You can see the pictures on the walls, the view from the kitchen

window. The power of visualization enables you to believe your affirmation and to dispel any apprehension or worry connected with the goal. The unknown becomes known and the indefinite becomes definite.

◆ Visualization enables you to see errors and incongruities in your plan and make corrections before mistakes become reality. If, while you repeat your affirmation “I enjoy sharing my dream home with my family,” you visualize that home in the most minute detail, you are already experiencing what it feels like to possess it. You can spot mistakes in the floor plan, the decorating scheme, or the size of the rooms. You may then adjust

your plan, correct the mistakes, and proceed without serious consequences. Your ego experiences a big boost because you eliminate the embarrassment and the discomfort of actually making a mistake.

◆ Concentrated visualization enables you to refine details. As you begin to visualize your dream home, it will likely resemble some house you have seen. But as you practice the art of visualization, you will begin to separate the features you like from those you don’t really care for. Then when your dream home is

a reality, it will have the distinctive touch that carries the flavor of your own family’s personality.

The old saying, “Seeing is believing,” was never more appropriate than when it is related to affirmation and visualization. When you set goals, aims, and desires, affirm your belief in your ability to achieve, and exercise the art of visualization to picture yourself already in possession of those goals, you develop an almost miraculous belief in yourself and your ability to succeed.

Willpower alone never produces success because determination and willpower do not foster belief. Unless you overcome and displace the negatives in your mind through the power of affirmation and see the results through visualization, you are forging ahead into the unknown. Remember, habits and attitudes are changed by displacement, that is, by substitution of a more satisfying mode of behavior for old habits. This is not to say that determination is unimportant. When you affirm your goals with belief and confidence and visualize them with clarity and accuracy, your goals are already in the process of becoming reality. You are on the way to success, and in a sense, have already pre-tasted the satisfaction of achievement.



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Establish a Motivational Climate

The organizational climate has a direct impact on your people. In an atmosphere designed to reinforce productivity, tension and fear are at a minimum and people feel free to use their full potential for creativity and achievement. As a leader, you bear the primary responsibility for establishing the climate in your organization, department, or work group. Give people the freedom to be who they are, and encourage them to become all their potential allows.

At the heart of a positive motivational climate is open, constructive communication. To maximize its effectiveness, remember that communication is always a two-way street. Listen to your people. Listen with your ears, your eyes, and your emotions. Not only do you discover the personal needs that motivate people, you benefit from hearing their valuable ideas. When you listen to people, they feel comfortable about sharing ideas and information.

Another important factor in establishing a motivational climate lies in your attitude toward mistakes and failures. When you constantly encourage your people to accept new responsibilities, to risk personal growth, and to increase their productivity, it is inevitable that they will make some mistakes, miss some goals, or make an occasional bad decision. If they never make mistakes, they are not trying anything new; they are merely going around and around in the same old rut. When mistakes occur or obstacles arise, choose to coach – not punish – the person involved. Use setbacks or missed goals as opportunities to teach better methods, improved thinking, and more effective procedures. Then allow time and opportunity for the team member to make adjustments and to restore the work to schedule. The benefits of this approach are unlimited:

- The needed correction is made;
- The team member learns and grows;
- You gain the respect and loyalty of the individual concerned, and
- The person you coach gains stature and increased competence.

Establishing and maintaining a motivational climate in the workplace requires a great deal of sensitivity to individual differences and a great deal of creativity in structur-

ing work assignments to maximize overall productivity. Because individual needs differ, how you lead people must differ. At the same time, the necessary procedures connected with the organization's needs must be met, and the difference in the way you lead people must avoid any appearance of preferential treatment. Give careful consideration to these factors:

◆ Structure and freedom

Some of your people are highly structured. They want to do things “by the book.” They want an explicit process to follow in every situation because this helps them feel safe. Give them training that makes it possible to do their jobs accurately and promptly, but do not burden them with the responsibility for making decisions in unusual situations. They will follow your instructions to the letter with a minimum of supervision. Others, however, like more freedom to devise their own work plan; they want to feel that their judgment is trusted and that they are free to exercise initiative.

◆ Creativity and conformity

It is to your advantage to encourage team members to use as much of their creativity as possible as long as it is focused narrowly on productivity. Your responsibility is to direct creativity toward appropriate targets and demand conformity in the type of situations where no deviation can be tolerated. The ethical policies of the organization, for example, are so vital to its existence that conformity must be maintained. No “creative” deviations can be allowed. Safety regulations must be followed to the letter. But many other areas easily lend themselves to experiment.

Encourage your people to grow and to develop. When one person in the organization grows, the whole organization benefits. Express approval of their efforts and praise their successes. Structure the organizational climate to make growth as easy as possible and to make it popular. Set the example by following your own program of personal growth and development. Some of your people will catch your enthusiasm and begin to use even more of their potential for success and achievement.



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Bridging the Gap Between Potential and Performance

Since 1966, Leadership Management International™ has been bridging the gap between potential and performance by helping organizations and individuals evaluate their strengths and opportunities through implementation of the unique and proven LMI Process™.

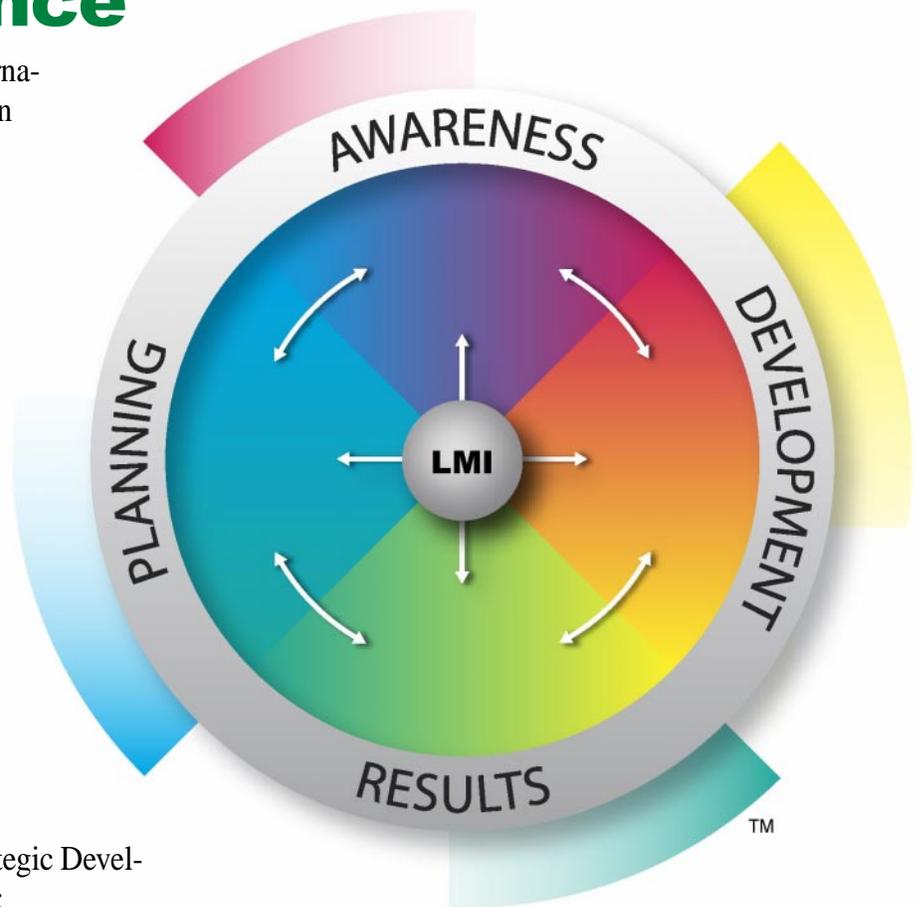
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