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Mind the Gap!

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Planning to Achieve Success

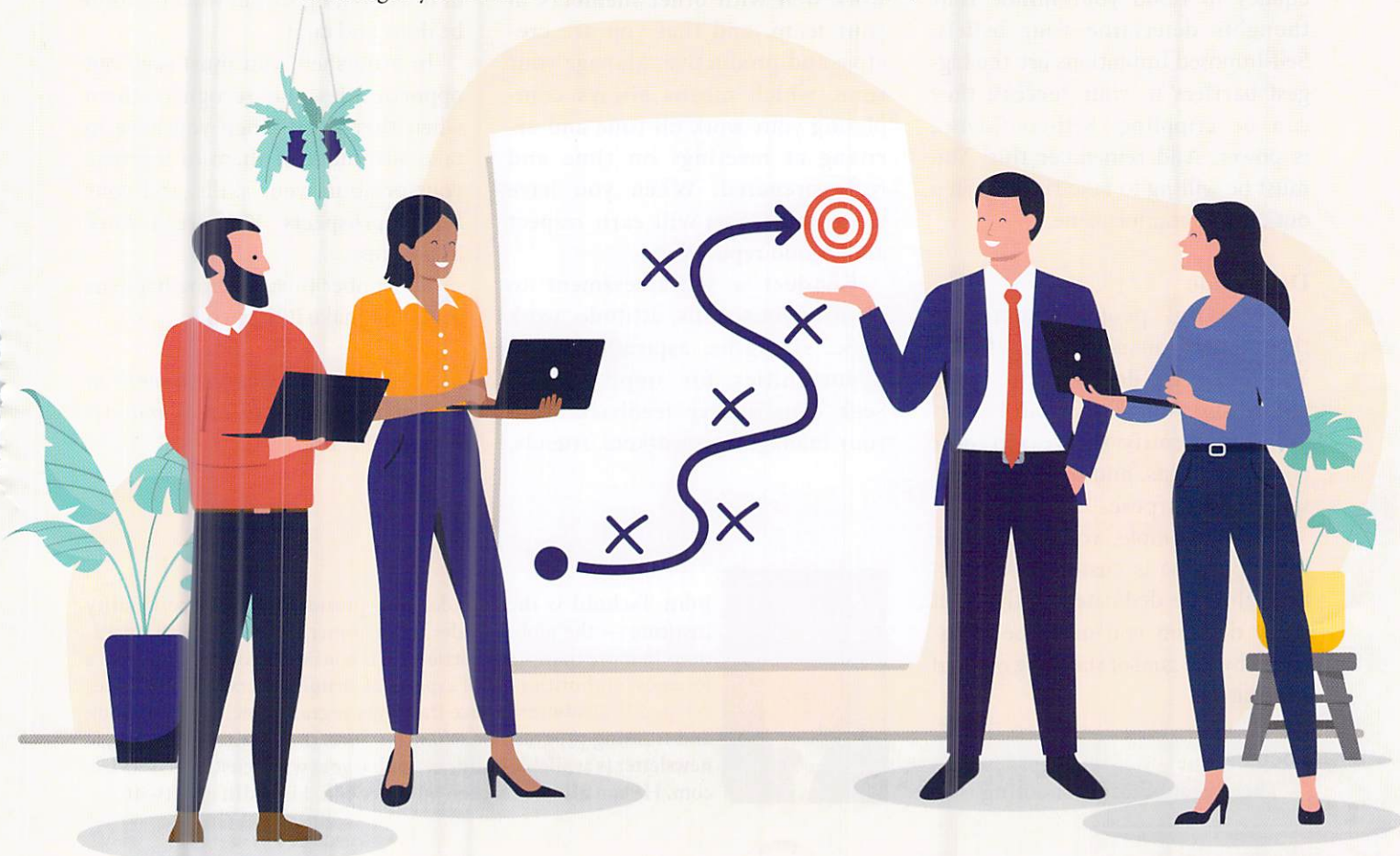
BY JOHN TSCHOHL

As the first quarter of the year draws to a close, the remaining months swing wide open with possibilities for you. To turn those possibilities into realities, you need to set goals, develop a plan, and put that plan into action.

The first step is to recognize where you are today and where you want to be in the months to come. If you are stuck in a job that no longer challenges you or that doesn't offer

the opportunity to advance your career, you need to take action.

The cornerstone of success is composed of four simple principles: belief, dedication, focus and skill.



Identify the reason your company exists, and dedicate yourself to that purpose.

When you embrace those principles, you will move forward.

Belief

If you continue to believe as you have always believed, you will continue to act as you have always acted—and get what you have always gotten. If you want different results in your life and your work, you must believe in yourself. All you have to do is change your mind. What you believe will manifest itself. Use positive thinking on a daily basis to reinforce the goals you have set—and then watch them begin to happen.

Believe in yourself. Don't allow low self-esteem or feelings of inadequacy to flood your mind. Your thoughts determine your beliefs. Self-imposed limitations are the biggest barriers to your success; they can be crippling. Self-confidence is power. And remember this: You must be willing to take risks, to step out of your comfort zone.

Dedication

Successful people understand that dedication is non-negotiable. You must be dedicated to your course and your goals from the beginning. Identify the reason your company exists, and dedicate yourself to that purpose.

If, for example, your company's main purpose is customer satisfaction, then be dedicated to that. Let every decision you make be influenced by the goal of standing out and moving up.

Focus

The object of target shooting is to

aim for the center; the same standard applies for success. When you are focused, you don't scatter your energy on unnecessary activities. You will achieve your goals, and you will have a sense of achievement and fulfillment. I caution you, however, to not have a backup plan. Why? Because if you do, you are subconsciously telling yourself that it's okay to fail because you have something to fall back on. Winners think differently. They fall forward because they know there is nothing to catch them if they fall backward.

Skills

It's critical that you develop a plan, that you communicate and work well with other members of your team, and that you are creative and productive. Manage your time, which means always completing your work on time and arriving at meetings on time and fully prepared. When you have these skills, you will earn respect and a good reputation.

Conduct a self-assessment to identify your skills, attitude, work ethic, strengths, aspirations, and opportunities for improvement. Seek constructive feedback from your managers, coworkers, friends,

family members, and even a few clients and customers you trust. Then use what they tell you to build on your capabilities and to create a plan of attack to improve on your shortcomings.

I also urge you to never stop learning. Take online courses, read a book on personal development every month. Enroll in mentoring or training programs, and take advantage of tuition reimbursement opportunities.

Successful people create a written blueprint for where they want to go in life—and in work. Set goals that are clear and measurable and that have a timeline. Make yourself indispensable. Don't wait for instruction or direction; figure out what needs to be done and do it.

In a nutshell, you must seek out opportunities and recognize them when they arise. Then you have to take advantage of them to improve your position, your skills, and your future prospects. You are a work in progress.

Remember this: Nothing happens until you make it happen.

MANA welcomes your comments on this article. Write to us at mana@manaonline.org.



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