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Succession Planning

Eastern Canada
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Strategic
Changes
for Closing
More Sales

Fear of Failure

BY JOHN TSCHOHL

“One of the greatest discoveries a man makes, one of his great surprises, is to find he can do what he was afraid he couldn’t do.”

— Henry Ford



FAILURE

Are you afraid to fail? If so, your fear of failure is likely to limit your chances of success. If you look at really successful people, you will often find significant failures in their backgrounds.

The list is lengthy and includes college dropouts, such as Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, and Mark Zuckerberg. Why? There are a lot of reasons. Most stem from the fact that they are (1) willing to try new things, (2) not afraid to “rock the boat,” and (3) they are able to take a bad situation and turn it into a positive and learn from their mistakes.

Many people respond to a crisis by being overwhelmed by stress, which turns to fear. It is easy to be afraid when you have a crisis situation in your business, but if you remain

calm, the people around you will be too, and together a strong team will be able to turn anything around.

A good example of that was Franklin D. Roosevelt. When World War II was looming and he was dealing with an unbelievable amount of issues, he remained calm with world leaders and the outcome was just as he had recommended. He stood steadfast in the face of anxiety, pressure from world leaders, and insecurities of political parties. He faced fear.

Accelerate your growth by: (1) being innovative and (2) not being afraid to fail. Even if your innovation does not work, you have little chance for success unless you try. If it does fail, you can learn from your mistakes, take corrective action, and try again.

SUCCESS



“I have learned over the years that when one’s mind is made up, this diminishes fear; knowing what must be done does away with fear.”

— Rosa Parks

Don't Be Afraid to Fail

- You've failed many times, although you may not remember.
- You fell down the first time you tried to walk.
- You almost drowned the first time you tried to swim.
- Did you hit the ball the first time you swung a bat? Heavy hitters, the ones who hit the most home runs, also strike out a lot.
- Were you able to skate or jump rope the first time you tried?
- R.H. Macy failed seven times before his store in New York caught on.
- 3M Corporation, one of the most successful companies in the world, was a dismal failure during its first 10 years.
- English novelist John Creasey got 753 rejection slips before he published 564 books.
- Babe Ruth struck out 1,330 times, but he also hit 714 home runs.
- Worry about the chances you miss when you don't even try.

Aim High Enough So You Will Never Be Bored

- The greatest waste of our natural resources is the number of people who never achieve their potential.
- Get out of that slow lane.
- If you think you can't, you won't.
- If you think you can, there's a good chance you will.
- Even making the effort is likely to make you feel like a new person.
- Reputations are made by searching for things that can't be done and doing them.

Good Advice From the Wall Street Journal

There are two posters published by the *Wall Street Journal* that I'd like to share with you (see the box on this page).

Many of the companies that were once great are now gone or are on their way out largely because they became too afraid to fail. According to a post in *Forbes*, in the 1920's, the average lifespan of a successful S&P 500 Company was 67 years. It is now 15 years.

To have a bright future you have to try new things. You have to risk failure to achieve great success. You need to listen to your customers and implement a customer service strategy. And remember, employees are proud to work for an organization that is committed to excellence in service to people.

Money is important but not the key to success. A clear and obvious commitment to quality service and a broad-based training and development program is key to building your future.

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



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