
DOCKET

INFORMED. INDISPENSABLE. IN-HOUSE.

Decide. Design. Determine. Do. Duplicate.

Skills and Professional Development



The science of achievement has not changed over the years since the early “How to Be a Winner” books or seminars became available. It’s a lot like losing weight: the components remain the same — it’s a matter of whether we are willing to do them or not.

I cannot speak for everyone, but it seems like most people tend to look for the shortcut or “magic pill.” However, there are no magic pills — for weight loss or success. Success is about the work we are willing to put in that determines what we get out. That does not necessarily equate to hard work, but we need to know that there are times in our lives when the work may be hard or we will run into challenges or obstacles. The bottom line is if we want something we have to be willing to put in the effort to obtain it.

Further, the work we are willing to put in has more to do with where we are mentally than where we are physically.

So what are those age-old steps that will take us from where we are to where we want to be?

Decide. First we have to decide what it is we want. In addition, we have to decide why we want it. Because when the going gets rough, we will need to know that the reason we are pursuing a particular course of action is worth the time and efforts we are expending.

Design. Then we need to come up with a plan. We can design a plan as broad or detailed as we want. Generally, the more details we address up front, the easier it will be to put the plan into action. When we think through the steps and identify potential obstacles, we begin to feel more secure with our decision to push forward. However, an important point to keep in mind is that as things change, and as the variables in our plan come to light, we have to be willing to modify our plan.

Determine. This step is about our resolve. Not necessarily willpower, but our resolve or determination to stick to our decision and our plan despite any rocky roads we might encounter. This is where understanding our ‘why’ is important. If we have embarked on a course of action that we are not wholly committed to, it will be difficult to stay the course when it is easier to turn back. Often the why has to be for a purpose bigger than us, while simultaneously being entirely personal.

Do. After all the thinking and planning it is time to do what we need to do to accomplish our goal. There comes a point in time where the planning has to cease and action must begin.

Duplicate. If at first you don’t succeed, dust yourself off and try again. Repeat any of the above as necessary. And don’t be afraid to make changes in how you approach a goal. If there were faults in your planning make the adjustments that will help you to reach the finish line the next time. Definitely remember that your life is full of successes and you can employ the same types of processes to your current endeavors you used in the past to succeed now.

When we put these steps in place, whether as these five “D’s” or by some other name, we create an intentionality that is hard not to bring to fruition. We simply need to remember that we have already accomplished our best when we give our best and employing these steps gives us the opportunity to continuously give the best of ourselves.

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Whitnie Wiley was a long-time columnist for the *ACC Docket*, where she wrote the *Lead the Way* column for more than seven years. The column provided leadership tips for in-house counsel and others as they pursue their personal and professional goals.