

HOW TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE

Excellence is like an insurance policy. Results need to satisfy employers, customers and shareholders, but whatever the quality of your work, continued survival of a business or continued employment cannot be guaranteed, especially in the current economic environment. Being excellent will go a long way to helping you keep a job, get a new job, become self employed or keep a business going.

Play to Your Strengths

Write down what you consider to be your best skills and qualities and get them checked by someone you trust to be honest and impartial. Make sure your strengths match the work you do or plan to do. For instance do not become a sales person, consultant or an independent financial adviser if you are shy or hesitant about selling yourself.

Achieving excellence is easier if you are using your best talents; it is not so easy if you are working in areas of weakness!

Learn to Improve

Seek to enhance your strengths and overcome your weaknesses by learning, training, education and practice. Ask yourself; "What problems do I have that need to be resolved?" "What challenges do I need to meet?" "What are the possible answers?" "What do I know?" "What do I need to learn?"

Reflect on what you have already learnt and know. Is it enough to keep you achieving excellent results in what you do?

It's about Planning, Doing, Checking and Acting – The PDCA approach as it is known, by Charles Handy, a professor at London Business School from 1972 to 1994, who is featured in a book I recently read on Business Masterminds by Robert Heller.

Supply Total Quality

Use the PDCA process to rethink and improve everything you do. This is something I am working on. Standards need to be set at the highest level, customers (internal and external) need to be debriefed on their assessment of your work, preferably face to face. This is what strengthens relationships and gives quality control.

Master Technology

The latest information technology, used in the right way, will improve communications, efficiency and customer service. It should also help you manage your time better.

The right computer programmes will help you generate the right documents, create presentations and reports, speed up and record communications, keep accounts and help you plan financially, keep track of your appointments and deadlines, list and cross refer contacts, file documents digitally and so much more!

Your website should be a marketing and communications tool and also interactive.

Sustaining Excellence

Sustaining excellence not only depends on skills, tools and techniques, but on having a long term view. Charles Handy recommended these four rules:

- Take responsibility for yourself and your future
- Form a clear view on what you want that future to be
- Determine to get that future
- Believe that you can do so – You can

Success breeds success and achieving excellence should bring even more success.

Steve Sarva