

LEARN ... from Nancy at Steadfast what she believes are the:

Four Steps to Success

You may be pleasantly surprised to learn this document is not necessarily related directly to accounting! Instead, my intention is to share what I have discovered over the past 25 years of working in the legal industry.

I have learned, and observed, that no matter what area of law my clients' practice, it is always a roller-coaster ride in business - - - except we never know how high or low the rise or dip will go. The series of dips and curves could be related to client work, staff changes and/or the often variable ride with cash flow. Therefore, I welcome you to use this document to help you explore ways to balance your law practice and your family life.

Before going further, I would like to clarify a few of my own expectations and assumptions made during the writing of this document.

First, I am assuming ...

- you have chosen to practice law as an enjoyable, and perhaps challenging, way to earning income; (Note: If it is NOT enjoyable, *why* are you stressing yourself by doing it?)
- whether you are meeting with clients, staff, associates, vendors, family or friends, you have recognized the opportunity to make them your best advocates; (Who says advertising has to cost something – when a referral is priceless?!)
- you already know it is easier to keep clients than attract new ones; After all, without clients, you have no business. (And, no business, means no money, which brings us back to the original assumption that you must *really* enjoy what you do!)

Secondly, I expect you may already know much of the information contained in this document, however...

I hope ... you will learn at least one new thing.

I know ... you have all the resources needed to be successful.

I believe ... you already know how to create loyal relationships.

I do plan ... to expand upon what you already know . . .
and allow you time to reflect on how you will use this new information.

So, now that you know my expectations... let's move on ...

.... I can't wait for you to notice how much more successful you will be ...

I believe...

I believe that

... no matter what type of law you practice

... or where in the world you are located

... the concept remains the same,

... to be truly successful,

... you must learn to:

BASK in your life ... as a lawyer (a boss, a colleague, a friend, a partner, a child)

- 1) **B**egin with the end in mind...
- 2) **A**ccept your limitations...
- 3) **S**eek assistance, when needed...
- 4) **K**now yourself...

So ... now that you know

... the Four Steps to Success ...

... how will you choose what will you do ...

... to "**BASK**" in your daily business and personal life?

1) **Begin with the end in mind. Set goals and strive to achieve them.**

If you don't know where you are going, how will you get there?

Time and time again it has been proven that individuals who write down their goals are more successful at reaching the end of their project.

Or maybe? ... Could it be? ... You are an individual who likes to start things, but would prefer to have someone else finish it. Well, guess what? That's perfectly ok, too! If you need someone else to finish projects for you, that could indicate you are better with the "big picture" ideas and are ready to become (or maybe you already are) a great employer or leader. There are always others who want to learn, follow, support & do the detailed work needed to complete the task at hand.

BUT, before you start, everyone needs to know and recognize the value of the end goal.

Having **SMART** goals will keep everyone on track. . .

1. **Specific.** State clearly what is to be accomplished.
2. **Measurable.** Outline the steps needed to complete the goal.
3. **Attainable.** Use any available support to complete each step.
4. **Realistic.** Make sure this goal is right for you. Don't stress yourself!
5. **Timely.** What is the deadline for completing your goal? Is it realistic?

If you have a "big" goal, it will need to be broken down into "smaller" goals.

Remember, we all had to learn how to crawl, walk & fall down - many, many times - before we learned how to run ... which ultimately led to more fun!

I use goals as guidelines. I consider where I want to end up and how I want to get there.

For example, while I may initially outline the route I want to take, I may need to adjust my process from time to time to ultimately get to where I want to be.

This is similar to driving a car to an appointment and suddenly discovering there is a detour along the way. I can choose to go with the traffic flow and take the new route... or consider an alternate route. Either decision is fine because even though I had to unexpectedly change direction I will still arrive at my destination.

So, please keep this tip in mind the next time you are setting goals: Go with the flow! It may even take you somewhere you may have never been before... and, sometimes, that can be a very good thing!

So, go ahead --- set your next SMART goal... or two... and remember...
...with ease and flow, *anything* is possible!

2) Accept your limitations. Know how to manage your time wisely.

What do you enjoy doing? What do you *NOT* enjoy doing?

What do you do well? What do you *NOT* do well?

What can you delegate to others? What can you *NOT* delegate to others?

Depending upon your view of the world, you will find it easier to answer these questions one way - - or the other. In the end, it does not matter how the questions are asked, but what does matter is that you accept yourself and your limitations for what they are.

Time. As the familiar story goes ... we have 24 hours to do with it what we want. We don't have any more than 24 hours and we certainly can't make more of it. Therefore, we must choose to wisely manage the hours we do have each day ... to work ... to live ... and ... to play!

As a business owner, I often feel like I could work every hour of every day, every week, every month and still never get caught up! Sound familiar?

Too often I find myself getting caught up in the details, perhaps with a tendency of trying to be too perfect in my work. While accuracy & precision is important when working with financial figures, it can get in the way of "enjoying the moment" with friends & family outside of the work environment ... especially when life isn't going the way I would like!

So, when my friends comment that I seem to be working a lot... that has now become a cue that I need to "wake up" and listen... and... I mean *really* listen. There is more to experience in life than work and this is something that you may also need to consider paying special attention to.

What needs *your* attention *outside of work*?

While I truly believe, and whole-heartedly understand, when we are doing work that makes us happy, it's not really work *Is it?!?*

In fact, when I am doing something that I enjoy, it makes me feel fulfilled and satisfied, so it doesn't really feel like "work" at all! Others may not understand this, because they may not be doing work that is rewarding for them.

Either way, rewarding or not, none of us can work ALL the time, our bodies (like our computers) all need to rest daily too.

Consider taking the time you need to truly learn to know yourself. Accept your limitations. Both these steps will go a long way to helping you learn how to begin with the end in mind!

Time ... how each of us use it ... will be different ...

but, don't you just love it ... when you have one of "those" days ...

when everything went well ...

the work fell into place ...

everyone was happy ...

"things" just seemed to flow ... with ease ...

and everything happened as it was suppose to?!

You know "that" kind of day ... I know you do...

...that end-of-day feeling

... the wonderful one you experienced, because ...

... it ended with a clean desk

... or the "to do" list was completed

... or ... because

... well, you know

... "just because" ... it was right for you!

That sense of accomplishment was there ...

... for you

... to experience and enjoy

... even the drive home didn't seem so bad! ☺

So, tell me, how could you *not* want more of "those" days?!

... Do you *know* what it would take to create *more* of them?

... Just for you?

3) **Seek assistance, when needed... and enjoy the freedom of it!**

Remember the 6 P's: Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance.

By nature, I am an organized person, especially when it comes to accounting, but that doesn't mean that I knew how to setup my own business & office space. When starting Steadfast I was fortunate to be part of a Canadian Federal Government Program through Human Resources Development Canada called Self-Employment Benefits (Assistance) Program. It helped take the over-whelming task of starting a business and showed me how to break it down into many smaller steps. Completing my first business plan was truly a great accomplishment. Plus, searching for the right people to help me set up my office space made that task much easier to complete, too!

When meeting friends, in those early days of starting my business, they would ask, "How's it going?"

I would laugh and joke that "me, myself & I" were doing fine, until ...

"I" who was busy creating new opportunities ... couldn't find the time to allow ...

"me" to do the work ... which also conflicted with "myself" who was trying very

hard to manage both "me" & "I" ... neither of whom wanted to be supervised!

Talk about a personality and time management conflict! I am sure every business owner has experienced this conflict ... and on more than one occasion!

Recognize where your expertise is lacking and seek assistance as needed. While most business owners are very knowledgeable on one particular aspect of their service there will be other areas where they will need help from a specialist. Contracted help is a perfect way to gain the skills needed to get going... and *you* get to enjoy the new-found freedom of learning how to delegate (not abdicate) to others so you can focus on what you do best!

Hiring right was another important step to prevent poor performance by Steadfast as we expanded to include more staff. Once again, I choose to seek outside assistance with the interviewing of prospective staff. In this instance, paying the specialist far outweighed the amount of time I would have spent on this challenging task. I was able to hire quickly, easily & with more confidence. For me, hiring the individuals with the best customer service-based attitude ensured that I was left to only "fill-in-the blanks" by providing on-the-job training for the additional skills they needed.

By the way, if procrastination is holding you back --- acknowledge it, accept it --- and then go to: www.lifepotential.ca to discover their valuable on-line product that will show you how to "Stop Procrastinating"! Just do it, you'll be glad you did!

4) **Know yourself...and your business!**

Know yourself. Know your business.

What are you prepared to do? What are you not prepared to do?

What are the limits you have for yourself, your staff and your business?

Who will you sell to? Who won't you do business with?

(NOTE: The answer "everything" or "everyone" is not an option!)

Be specific. Do your research. Know where you want to end up.

What are your values and your work ethics?

What are your leadership strengths and weaknesses?

What policies & procedures need to be put into place to ensure an efficient & effective business operation?

When a problem is beyond your control and cannot be changed, don't waste energy complaining about the situation. Sometimes the best decision is to do nothing. Remember, going with the flow can help you learn how to accept what is happening "for now", or until such time as you can change it later - - - or maybe you won't!?

But, perhaps most importantly ... Make time for fun...

Schedule your time carefully for work ... for rest ... and ... for play!

Everyone needs a break from their daily routine to relax and have fun.

Share a laugh (or learn to laugh at yourself). After all, laughter *is* the best medicine!

Meditate. Read a book. Call an upbeat friend or family member.

Walk with friends ... or play with a pet.

Planning a week's worth of menus can reduce meal-time stress!

Is exercise a challenge for you? Do you question whether you need high intensity or low? Why not just do whatever feels good at the time? And, stop judging yourself for what you have not done. Get out and do something – it is much better than doing nothing!

By the way, there is no "right" or "wrong" decision ...

... it's what you choose to do with the decision that can make it right or wrong!

Take the time to learn how to just "be".

Remember, sometimes doing nothing at all is just as important as doing it all!

So, now, is the time to **BASK** in your life...

... whatever that may mean for you

... expanding upon what you already know

... reflecting on where you've been ...

... or where you want to go,

... So, now, that you know

... you have all the resources you need ...

... to make the choices that are right for you ...

... how much more successful will you choose to be?!

In closing, I want to share the following advise from a "SUCCESS" poster in Steadfast's office that says:

S tart with a dream, then start working.

U nderstand first, then be understood.

C reate your own opportunities.

C ourage, character, caring, communication

E mbrace challenges, expect no less than your best

S implify and maintain focus

S uccess is not the key to happiness, happiness is the key to success.

So, tell me, or more importantly, ask yourself ... *what* makes you happy?