



Winning Ways

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Winning Ways

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Winning Ways NewsBits

Attention Anyone who SELLS HOMES! Betsy Hudson will offer a **Winning at Sales** class tailored specially for anyone who sells homes. Space is limited, so register today!

Making Contacts Count seminar will be offered by Terry Nicholetti in DC in July. Register today on the website!

Summer Youth Training

Program offered through the DC Chamber of Commerce on June 26th. Mark Tatum with Winning Ways will be speaking on youth leadership. Register at www.dcchamber.org

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Too Busy Not to Plan

Dave is a fairly new business owner. He was scared at first, and still worries a lot, but things have been going well and he's starting to feel like he can really do this. He's excited about getting to actually live the dreams he's had for so long. Most of all though, he's busy. He works hard, and comes home exhausted, and yet his head is always filled with thoughts of everything he didn't get done and needs to do. He doesn't remember the last time he slept a full eight hours, or had a Saturday just to relax. He knew owning a business would be hard work, but he never would have believed it could be this hard. Every night, as he goes to bed worn out and thinking how few hours it will be before his alarm clock goes off, he tells himself, "This is just the starting phase... once I get myself established, it won't be nearly this bad."

He's heard about strategic planning, and knows it would be a good idea, but he can't imagine taking the time to develop a plan right now. He barely has enough time to do everything that needs to be done to keep his business afloat—spending valuable hours on developing a plan would be completely counterproductive. In a little while, when things settle down, then he'll do it. Right now, he just has to work as hard as he can to get things going. Maybe he can start taking a few hours on Sundays for work too... his wife and kids won't like it, but they'll understand... it's only for a little while...

Dave is trying, and he's certainly devoting himself heart and soul to his work, but he's making a mistake too many of us are prone to: he is spending all his time doing what is *urgent*, instead of what is *important*. He is surrounded by things that urgently need to be done, and they are crowding out those things that are most important to his overall success.

If you've ever been slightly late for an appointment at an unfamiliar destination, you'll understand Dave's predicament. Knowing you're already running late, it's tempting to just get in the car and go, thinking, "I'll be able to find it... the name of that street sounds familiar." Those of us who have tried that approach know that, nine times out of ten, it leads to a string of detours and backtracks, and you arrive much later than

you would have if you'd taken five minutes to consult a map.

Strategic planning is like checking the map before you set out to drive somewhere. It doesn't seem urgent at the time—it doesn't seem like it will actually take you anywhere. Wouldn't it be much better to spend your time *driving*, instead of planning? But of course, we know that without a planned route, we have little chance of actually getting to where we're trying to go. It's the same way with business planning.

There is always more to do. There is always something that urgently needs to be done. But without a strategic plan, you will not know which of all the urgent activities facing you is *most* important. A strategic plan helps you discern between things that would be good to do, and things that are essential to do. Your vision, and the strategic plan that comes out of it, will show you where to focus your energies. It will help you eliminate tempting distractions—pursuing a client that is not in your target group, or accepting an offer to speak in another state when your real priority is developing a community presence. Your strategic plan gives you the information you need to answer the question, "What activity *right now* is most vital to my success?"

While it seems to take up time, having a strategic plan actually *saves* a tremendous amount of time, by showing you what the most efficient use of your time is. If every hour you spend is used more effectively, if you are confident that you're spending your time on the most important activities, think how much more progress you can make! A strategic plan is one of the most important tools to help you work *smart* as well as hard.

So if you ever meet Dave, remind him again that he still needs to develop his strategic plan. And if he says, "I don't have time to," you can say, "No, Dave: you don't have time *not* to."

Drawing the Map

To map a path, you need two pieces of information: where you are now, and where you are going.

Your vision is your destination. What does "success" look like to you? Remember, this is the phase where daydreaming is not a waste of time—it is an essential component of success!

Once you know what your destination looks like, you have to assess where you are now, and what it will take to get to where you want to be.

Developing a strategic plan can be intimidating, but there are lots of resources available... and if you've figured out your destination and your starting-point, you've got the basic shape of your map already!