

Building a Better Business, 1/20th of 1 Percent at a Time
By Fred Schafer, MS, CFT

“Most people spend all of their lives developing just one part of their body, their wishbone”....Robert Frost

“Nothing happens till something moves”.....Albert Einstein

Much of my knowledge of success in business and life was discovered through fitness training. My involvement in fitness training began 39 years ago and I have been training others for the past 17 years. These experiences give me great confidence that any business, life or body can get better. Incredibly better in most cases.

There are two principles from fitness training that were cemented into my belief system as a teenager. They are; “If you can move, you can improve” and “progression, not perfection”. Interestingly, these principles have been of great benefit to me and those I have worked with in business.

These principles can move you and your business to a measurably better place too. To start this process make a written goal to improve your business results by 1% each month. That is cumulative over the year and of course adds up to 12% each year. In an exercise that follows in this article you will learn how to make this goal a part of your daily work.

Imagine that you could experience 12% growth in your business and/or personal income every year. If you break that 1% a month down to a day your goal is to advance your business (counting an average of 20 weekdays per month) by 1/20th of 1% each day. If you made that happen greater success will eventually happen for you, despite the difficult economy or any other excuse you want to use.

Many people these days are marinating in unhealthy, negative stress. All unhealthy stress is fear based. You hear people say they are “stressed” but what they really mean is that they are *afraid* or at least worried about the future. Many business owners I talk with are afraid and worried. Business is down and declining for many. The concern is understandable but what can be done? As noted sales trainer Tom Hopkins says, “Don’t worry, work”.

You of course are already working hard to build a stronger business. But just like in fitness training, in business there are certain “exercises” that produce superior results. Here is a professional exercise I use with business, wellness and life coaching clients that you can use to build a better association. I call it the “**1110 word exercise**”.

The exercise has three parts. Part one of the exercise involves you writing up to *but no more than* 1000 words. You can write less of course, but not more than 1000 words. By

the way, this entire article is exactly 1200 words, so you get the picture. Speaking of pictures, they say a picture is worth a 1000 words. And that in fact is the purpose of this part of the exercise; you are drawing a picture with your words of ultimate success for your business.

No doubt you already have written goals and objectives for your business. I am suggesting you do it again, but this time *really cut loose* and write with as much heart, emotion, humor and passion as you can muster up. Too many people have written goals and objectives that lack life.

You want to outline an exciting adventure of where your business is going but you have to really mean it! Picture this in your mind. What will incredible success for your business look like? To start this process, it helps to see your business as a blank canvas. Next, imagine there were **no limitations** on it. Creatively describe in vivid, exciting detail the outcomes you would love to see in your company. Be as specific and tenacious as you possibly can. This is where you include your 1% improvement for the month goal.

You are in fact “drawing the dream” for your company in 1000 words or less. How many clients/customers would you have? How much would they invest with you each year on average? How many referrals would you get from each client? What would their written testimonials say about how they felt about working with you, etc, etc.

The second part of the exercise is only **100 words**. This is where all excuses and arguments as to why we are not as successful as we say we would like to be are exposed. In 100 words or less, describe how you spend your *typical* workday. From the time you start working till you are finished. This 100 word exercise came about through frustration in working with clients who were not getting results and had all kinds of excuses why they could not get things done. By breaking down their day to see how they actually spent their time and what their deeply ingrained habits were we could then begin to work on unproductive, counter productive, and usually fear-based procrastination that needed to be addressed if there was ever going to be any noteworthy success.

The 100 words exercise is designed to help you discover your *daily determined direction*. I use the phrase “drip-drip-drip” to symbolize that your “daily determined direction”, if used properly, can wear down any obstacle that stands between you and your success. The idea is that you are doing something *everyday* to make your organization better at serving its clients (customers, members, guests) and then you are asking someone for their business everyday, either directly or indirectly.

Again, in fitness training, the clients who end up shocked at how much improvement they have made are the ones who dedicate themselves to 1/20th of 1% improvement every day without fail. The same holds true for those in business. Whether it is a personal phone call to someone you have never talked to before or just a follow up call to someone who may be sitting on the fence or a call to thank someone for doing business with you. You push past your fear and ask someone to invest in their future by partnering with you to make the world a better place for all.

Another suggestion for your “100 word day” is to include the sentence, “Read inspirational material every morning”. Sales superstar Jeffrey Gitomer says one of his “secrets” is to read something positive every morning. I do the same and encourage all of my clients to do likewise, even if it is only for 5 minutes or one page of a good business or life building book.

The last part of the exercise is only **10 words**. These are your “words of life” that you live by. The purpose of these 10 words is to keep you going through setbacks, disappointments and times when you may feel like giving up. The power of the 10 words was realized by having my fitness clients do this exercise *before* they did any actual physical exercise. Many fitness clients are tempted to quit during the first few weeks!

When that happens it helps for them to review their 10 words to persevere. Likewise, as an entrepreneur my “10 words” are a source of encouragement to press on in the good times and the not so good. My 10 words, surprisingly, are, “Move by 1/20th of 1 percent today in the right direction”. It is my hope that this article will move you and your business in the right direction of growth, strength and prosperity.

*Fred Schafer is a high performance specialist in the areas of leadership, business growth and wellness. He is also the founder and President of **Fully Alive Performance Systems**, a Business and Life Coaching and Consulting Services Organization and the **Free Range Fitness Center**, which strengthens and equips people to maximize their physical and mental/emotional health. Fred is the author of two books and a professional speaker nationally recognized for his ability to strengthen people to strike back at mediocrity and move to greater mastery in their professional and personal lives. To learn more about him please visit www.fredstrikes.com.*