

Dear Friend,

Travlin' Treasure

As I write this month's message, I'm on an airplane, returning home after a client meeting.

It's a funny thing. Lately, while on the road, I've been having some really interesting conversations, though probably not with the people you'd expect. Cab and shuttle drivers, airplane seat mates, restaurant servers, and even hotel gift shop staff...all sharing thoughts about life, and careers, and choices, and the future.

I guess that, besides the actual *business* that has kept me scooting, there's been another unintended assignment (unintended on my part anyway). These trips have provided the chance to engage, exhort, and encourage folks concerning their personal journeys. We've talked about taking steps to define, develop a strategy around, and then do something important in their lives.

So, I ask you.

Are you where you want to be on your journey?
Do you even have personal and/or professional goals in mind?
Have you created a strategy for success?

If not, why not?
If so, how can you give your plan a jumpstart and accomplish even more?

Well, keep reading. This month's *EA Insights* offers some thoughts on creating a personal strategy for success.

But, there's more. You don't have to go it alone. Additional support is yours for the asking. I invite you to contact me to explore how we can partner as you develop, continually reassess, and carry out your own strategy for success.

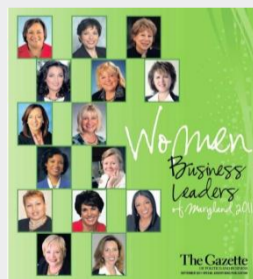
All the best,

June

June Melvin Mickens
Executive Advantage, LLC

Congratulations, June...

on being named one of the Women Business Leaders of Maryland 2011 by *The Gazette of Politics and Business*. To read the full story, [click here](#).



Don't Get Left Behind: Creating Your Personal Strategy for Success

June Melvin Mickens
Executive Advantage, LLC



Let me describe a conversation I had recently. I was chatting with a man, established in his career, but beginning to ask himself the "What's next?" question.

Sound familiar?

Well, you can guess that I did some probing about skills and passions, possibilities and necessities. As his comfort level grew, he revealed more and more regarding attitudes about self, opportunities seized, as well as dreams deferred.

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"Quotes"

"You may not accomplish every goal you set, no one does, but what really matters is having goals and going after them wholeheartedly."

~Les Brown

"However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results."

~Winston Churchill

"[U]ltimately, each of us has to define who we are individually and then do the very best job we can to grow into it."

~Hillary Clinton

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

~Confucius

"When you're prepared, you're more confident. When you have a strategy, you're more comfortable."

~Fred Couples

"Strategy is a style of thinking, a conscious and deliberate process, an intensive implementation system, the science of insuring future success."

~Pete Johnson

"We are at our very best, and we are happiest, when we are fully engaged in work we enjoy on the journey toward the goal we've established for

When our time neared its end, and we prepared to part ways for the day, it was clear that he'd taken our conversation to heart. I smiled when he reflectively spoke (to himself as much as to me) that figuring this all out is important to him because he doesn't want to miss out on the rest of his life.

Sound familiar?

If it does, you're not alone.

A lot of folks, admittedly or not, are just going through the motions. They're surviving, but really not thriving. And, they're wondering how to make a change.

So, don't want to get left behind? Don't want to miss out on the rest of your life? Consider these 5 Ds for creating your personal strategy for success.

Define. It all starts with how you're thinking about YOU. So, by *define*, I mean determine who you are -- your temperament, your experiences, your skills, and more. Define your vision of success at this point in your life or in a particular area. Essentially, the defining step helps you to know your starting point and to begin creating an image of your future.

Develop. Put together a plan of attack. In the curricula we use with clients, there's a sad, but true, commentary on too many folks. Many people take more time planning a 2-week vacation than they do planning the other 50 weeks of the year. Sad...but all too true!

So, if you're really serious about that vision of success, defining is an important first step. But, you've got to take the next one, which is to develop a plan for what you could do, how, when, and with whom (if appropriate).

Think about it. If I want to go from Maryland to California, it's going to take more than just walking outside and wishing myself there. Somewhere along the way, a travel plan has to be drawn up -- one that takes into account when I need to be there, what my options are for transportation, and the answers to a host of other travel-related questions. Why do any less for the future?

Do (something). Defining and developing are critical. However, at the end of the day, if you're ever going to make meaningful steps toward that personal success vision, you've got to DO SOMETHING.

Quite frankly, the moment you start moving forward with your plans, success begins. Success isn't necessarily a single point in time or a particular achievement. Rather, it's stepping out on your journey and one-by-one tackling the actions that get you closer to that personal vision of you. So, do something.

Double (back). Periodically, take some time to reassess your priorities, your environment, and your plan. Don't get so locked into a plan that it takes on a life of its own, and you feel tied to it...whether it still makes sense or not.

Return to the travel analogy for a minute. Although the plan may have been to get to California by plane, if air traffic controllers go on strike, clearly I'm going to need another means of travel. Or, if the meeting I was set to attend is cancelled, the need for the trip has gone away entirely.

It's similar with personal planning. Step back and re-evaluate from time-to-time to ensure the continued relevance of both goal and strategy.

Depend (on someone beyond yourself). I often laugh with people that *Executive Advantage* tends to partner with two kinds of clients. On the one hand is the "kick in the pants" group. These are the folks who need the structure and accountability we provide and they crave. Otherwise, they wouldn't get much done at all! On the other hand is the "iron sharpens iron" group. In this category are people who truly don't need us, but who want a partner to walk with them, provide diverse perspectives, challenge mindsets and approaches, and encourage them to become even stronger and better positioned.



The reality is that, whichever group may represent you, support often means the difference between achieving your dreams and just going through another fruitless exercise. Although I'm clearly partial to the type of assistance we provide through *Executive Advantage*, what's most important is that you develop a supportive relationship that's right for you.

It's about finding a partner who's not so invested in your career or business operation that objectivity and candor are lost. It's about creating a level of trust, such that no matter in your business or life is beyond reach. It's about selecting someone who's walked where you are so that counsel goes beyond theory to experience. And, it's about teaming with someone who's available so that, as situations arise on an ongoing basis, you have the timely support of a neutral sounding board.

No, my friend, don't get left behind! Don't miss out on the rest of your life! Rather:

- Define
- Develop
- Do (something)
- Double (back)
- Depend (on someone beyond yourself).

Make these 5 Ds the keys to your personal strategy for success.

ourselves. It gives meaning to our time off and comfort to our sleep."

~Earl Nightingale

"Success is steady progress toward one's personal goals."

~Jim Rohn

"It's a good time to double-check and make sure you're on the right plan."

~Sam Simon

"Everybody needs a partner to stand right by their side...not only down for the good times, but also down through the bad times."

~Will Smith

"It is necessary to develop a strategy that utilizes all the...conditions and elements that are directly at hand. The best strategy relies upon an unlimited set of responses."

~Morihei Ueshiba

"Determination makes a person thrive in life."

~Unknown

"I define success as being comfortable with yourself and your life. And that is about as good as it gets, really."

~Treat Williams

About Executive Advantage

At **Executive Advantage**, we are committed to providing results-based business and management consulting, leadership development, and coaching support. We partner with business leaders to build healthy, well-functioning organizations, where goals are met and people thrive. We also partner with individuals to create professional (and personal) lives with clearer direction, improved results, and greater balance.

To learn more about **Executive Advantage**, contact us [online](#) or at **(301) 280-5950**.

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