

THE FINANCIAL EDGE

October 2014



The Abundance of Nature

Personal comments by Mary

Fall is surrounding us. The leaves are turning yellow, orange and red collecting on our lawns and the air is getting colder. It is time to clean up my gardens and prepare for the upcoming winter.

The abundance of nature always amazes me. With the right conditions - you just plant the seeds and the garden produces in abundance. This year my giant bearded irises got too close to the house and started to grow under the siding. I really do not care for my siding to pull away from the house; it was time for the plants to go. I recall only planting twenty of them three years ago but when I removed them this fall I ended up with at least 10 times that. This was a result of the sun, rain and soil doing what they do.

The abundance of nature got me thinking about the seeds we plant for business. I use my monthly newsletter, website and other marketing efforts to share what we do. Our story is then passed on by others. Add to that an economy that nurtures small business owners, a society that encourage owners to be the next billionaire and a government that keeps complicating the lives of small business. We have the ideal conditions to experience growth.

Thank you to those who are enjoying the newsletter and sharing what we do!

Mary Guldán-Lindstrom

What Our Clients Are Saying...



"As a small business owner, I find that it is easy to get so caught up in the details of running the operations, collecting money and paying bills, that I forget to look at the bigger picture of profitability and whether or not we are growing as we should. You sort of help to anchor me in the thinking that I need be doing. You make it "comfortable" to look at the big picture and to think of what it means to be a business person and not just an operator of a "process" that generates revenue."

*Greg Robinson, Innkeeper/Owner of
Astor House Bed & Breakfast*

*Your referrals are treated with utmost
care and are greatly appreciated!*



The Book Review

Title: The Success Systems that Never Fails

Author: William Clement Stone

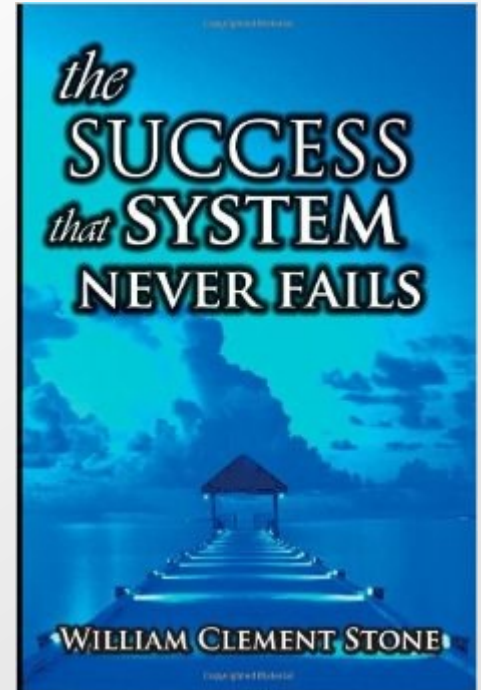
Topic: Success

Easy to Read: \$\$\$\$\$ (5 out of 5 dollars)

Applicable to small business: \$\$\$\$\$ (5 out of 5 dollars)

Summary: This is a self-help book to face your fears, develop discipline, define your riches and take charge of your success. W. Clement Stone shares his story along with a basic guideline that will inspire you into action, encourage you to learn how to achieve your riches and the experience to apply that knowledge.

My Recommendation: Great book for those looking to achieve more in life! Pages are filled with philosophies, tools, and methods to increase your level of success. W. Clement Stone was one of the originators in the publishing field of success.



Pages: 241 | Published: 2012 but written in 1962

What Super Power Do You Want?

Last month I went Halloween costume shopping with my boys. As young adults cartoon characters hold no appeal, witches and devils have been overdone, but superhuman characters get the pulse going.

James found Spider-Man, Iron Man and a bright yellow Angry bird costume. John was looking for a shield to complete his Captain America costume. Spider-Man, Iron Man, Hulk, Wolverine and Captain America all have one thing in common - they can do extraordinary things.



To ignite your imagination I made a list of super powers.

- Invisibility
- Healing
- Superhuman strength, endurance, speed, etc
- Absorb someone else strengths
- Breath underwater
- Time travel
- Manipulate time
- Predict the future
- Control the weather
- Read others mind, use mind control
- Talk to animals
- Understand all languages
- Never get sick, weak or die
- Have a Personal force field
- Walk through walls, venture into space or go deep into the oceans

I have a desire deep down to do something spectacular, however I cannot make a choice of which talent I would like to have. For each talent carries with it the possibility of harm.

What super power do you want?

Once enhanced, what would you do?

By Mary Guldán-Lindström

Finding the Right Tool! Financial Tools.

By Mary Guldán-Lindstrom, CPA

Having the right tools always make the job easier. A tack hammer is a better tool to hang a picture than a sledgehammer. A tape measure is better than a ruler to determine the room dimensions. So do you have the right tools to reach your business goals?

Let's take a look into the business tool box - here are few samples:

✂ **Break even analysis** - when starting a new business, adding a new location or experiencing extreme growth the first step is to generate enough cash flow to stay in business. The break even analysis is a critical tool. This provides how much daily, weekly or monthly sales are necessary to cover costs.

✂ **One page strategy plan** - having the company values, mission, 3 year plan and current quarter goals on one page is a tool designed by management and used to create a synergistic force. A communication tool creates focus and movement of a cohesive group.

✂ **Key productivity indicators** - Each job within a business has at least one critical activity that contributes to the success of the organization. The challenge is to identify the action, measure it, set a goal and monitor it. For example, the front desk picks up the phone by the third ring, sales staff measure prospect calls and marketing measures responses by prospects.

✂ **Dashboard** - The weekly dashboard consists of a variety of key productivity indicators that create success in your unique business based on your specific situation.

✂ **Key Ratios to monitor:**

- EBITDA is earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization. This number represents earnings generated by operations. EBITDA is a key business finance number and used to compare operational results.
- RETURN on equity - each owner is an investor in their business. Return on equity measures the rate of return the owner receives on the money left in the business.
- Cash flow ratios - Number of Days Sales Outstanding, current ratio, debt to equity and working capital available all help to determine if the company is generating and managing adequate cash flow.

And, of course there are the good old boy standbys - Income Statement, Balance Sheet and Statement of Cash flows. These key financial statements are standard and necessary for outsiders such as the tax authorities and banks.

To maximize your time and efforts apply a concentrated focus, pick the tool that will provide the most benefit to your business situation and use it. Change as your situation improves or the business grows.

Just like the carpenter and his tool box, accountants have tools to improve your business!

Contact us if you would like to explore some of these financial tools. We can assess your situation and make recommendations on which tool(s) will make the greatest impact.



Hip Hip Hooray! Halloween is near!!
It's not the ghoulies, ghosties or
monsters I fear, it's the
10 lbs of candy
that will go to my rear!!

ROTTENCARDS



Images from Pinterest.com

ATTENTION! NOW ACCEPTING NEW CLIENTS

At FOCUS CPA we are accepting new clients. We have very passionate, competent and caring staff that have over 30 years of experience, each, working with small business owners. Contact Jodi at 351-4842 or Jodi@focus-cpa.com to set up a free initial appointment to see how we can improve your situation.

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE



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Did You Know...

About Your Social Security Account

Despite the constant threat of the government's Social Security program going bankrupt - the program is still here and is expected to stay. The government now offers a "my Social Security" account to help prepare for your retirement. Since we pay in for most of life and collect later in life – here are some basics on how the benefits are calculated:

- You must work about 10 years of work to gain eligibility and to calculate benefits.
- The system looks at your 35 top-earning years, adjusting for inflation over the course of your career, to come up with an average indexed monthly earnings amount.
- You have a choice as to when you can start to claim benefits at early retirement age (62, full retirement age (depends on the year you were born) and age 70. At this point planning can make a difference as to what you will collect for your life time benefits.

Go to www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount to open your own personal online account. There you can verify your earnings, get estimates of your future benefits and manage your benefits.

Sourced from <http://www.forbes.com>