



The Success Formula, continued.
Step 1: Building Your Ideal Future State

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My last article, The Success Formula (Success = Results Delivered x Fulfillment Lived), generated a lot of interest, especially around the suggestion that to achieve true success, it is necessary to *"make the abstract components of success tangible and definable."* Many readers asked me how to achieve this task. To respond, my next few articles in *Richard's Views* will address four steps to overcoming the challenges of understanding both variables in the Success Formula.

Step 1. Building Your Ideal Future State

Step 2. Identifying the Factors and Behaviours Critical to Your Success

Step 3. Keeping Score

Step 4. The InnerWarrior Cycle™ – Being systematically purposeful in your quest for success

Beginning with the end

Many wise leaders in business, sport and life follow Steven Covey's* advice and start with their desired end in mind. To this effect, I suggest you begin your quest for success by building an Ideal Future State, or IFS. Building an IFS requires "pragmatic visioning", where an individual or organization clearly states the RESULTS they want to deliver (the tangible, obvious components of success) as well as the nature of the FULFILLMENT (the intangible, not-so-obvious components of success) their quest for success will bring. Building an IFS is an exercise in PRAGMATIC CREATIVITY – it requires CONSCIOUSLY creating a REALITY that yet doesn't exist.

* *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (Simon and Schuster, 2000)

Success = Self-Transformation

The only predictable aspect of the quest for success is that it will involve change. To seek improvement (or to become more successful) is to change: it is a conscious and purposeful process of transforming yourself or your organization into something different. The true challenge lies in deciding HOW to change. The quality and the quantity of success achieved is always an outcome of the individual's or organization's ability to consistently make the right decisions on HOW to change next. For example, a company implements an innovative strategy and captures market shares. Does it continue on the same path, based on its current success, or does it continue to innovate? The answer to this will dictate the success it ultimately achieves.

Once built, a solid IFS becomes a reliable frame of reference for HOW the individual or organization should change. It acts as a powerful beacon, guiding the ongoing decision-making process.

The steps to building your Ideal Future State:

Building an Ideal Future State is simple: there are only three steps to implement. The quality of the Ideal Future State is directly related to the reflection invested in completing these three steps. The time and effort invested at the onset will greatly enhance and clarify every stage of your quest for success.



- a. Gather your data. Identify and compile as many of the components of the success you want to deliver by reflecting upon and answering the questions about **Results** and **Fulfillment** listed below. Be sure to complete all the necessary research and inquiries, referring to books, the Internet, people, specialists etc. The questions I've listed are generic: adapt them to your specific situation (individual, athlete, organization, etc.).
- b. Based on your answers to the questions, write an initial ONE-PAGE statement that describes the COMPLETE STATE of SUCCESS you want to deliver. This will be the first draft of your Ideal Future State. Restrict yourself to one page or about 650 words – the ultimate goal is to carve out the true core of the success you want to deliver.
- c. Re-visit your Ideal Future State five or six times over a period of a couple of weeks. Try to make it more complete and specific each time. Within an organization, involve all key players in this process.

Before you begin, remember that the questions presented are meant as a framework for building your Ideal Future State. Feel free to add any relevant information and/or content.

Some Questions about the “Results” Variable of the Success Formula:

What specific results do you want to deliver?

- Organization: revenue, sales, membership, market shares, etc.
- Individual: level of performance achieved, rewards, recognition, promotions, awards, etc.

When will you deliver these results and level of performance?

- Date, timeline, year, quarter, century, etc.

A note about timeline: In my experience, I have realized that the scope of any quest for success should be a very personal decision. It should be dictated by the nature of the endeavor and what you are comfortable with. Some people and organizations are comfortable thinking in very long terms while others prefer short term goals. Often the urgency of the situation and the context will dictate the timeline.

What practical, technical, organizational or mechanical weaknesses must you improve upon in order to deliver this level of performance and results?

- Specific skills, techniques, abilities, competencies, etc.

What practical, technical, organizational or mechanical strengths can you build upon to deliver such level of performance and results?

- Specific skills, techniques, abilities, competencies, strengths, etc.

Can you identify a model that displays the kind of skills you want to achieve?

- Organization: A business or organizational model to duplicate. The Canadian airline WestJet successfully adapting the Southwest Airlines business model, for example.
- Individual: A role model: Wise like Gandhi; Innovative like Edison; Well-coiffed like Trump; etc.
- Athletes: Courageous like Ali; Classy like Gretzky; Confident like Woods, etc.

Any other wishes you have regarding the results and level of performance you want to deliver?



Some Questions about the “Fulfillment” Variable of the Success Formula:

People are greatly affected by their physical environment. From that perspective, describe the physical surroundings, the settings you will create when you deliver your Ideal Future State. What will be special and enjoyable about your environment? What kind of atmosphere and context will you create?

- For athletes, imagine yourself at the Olympics, parading around the stadium with your shoulders draped in your country’s flag. For a hockey player, imagine yourself skating with the cup above your head. If your IFS is to play university sport, imagine what it would feel like to live on the campus of your chosen university, playing in front of 80,000 cheering fans.
- For organizations, describe an environment that will represent your objectives and your values. For example, when we built our own Ideal Future State at InnerWarrior Consulting, we described our future offices as bright, colourful and open-spaced, where people engage in purposeful, pragmatic and creative endeavours. A space in which people will be able to work and live with great flexibility.
- For the individual, imagine where you will live your success: a new house, a different country, a better climate, a vineyard in the south of France, etc.

What must change within yourself through your quest for success?

- Values, attitudes, and mental competencies. Some examples include leadership, courage, focus, motivation, honesty, etc.

As you strive to deliver your IFS, how would you like to:

- Feel about yourself and/or your organization (confident, in control, creative, determined, etc.)?
- Relate to and communicate with others? With each other?
- Present yourself?
- Grow as a person? Grow as an organization? Grow as a team?
- Motivate yourself? Motivate others? Motivate each other?
- Other wishes?

What new behaviour or shift(s) in behaviour would you like to observe in yourself? In your organization? In your team?

- Improved/new mental qualities and competencies?
- Improved/new state of mind?
- Improved/new perspectives, outlook and mindset?
- Other wishes?

What’s your purpose?

- What’s in it for you?
- What’s in it for your organization?
- What’s in it for your community? (Local, national, global)

What will be the fringe benefits for you? For your organization? For your stakeholders?

- Doors opened, opportunities presented, people met, places travelled, experience garnered, relationships improved, etc.

Other wishes regarding the fulfillment you and/or your organization will live in the process of delivering results?



The next step

Your Ideal Future State will be the focal point of your quest for change. It is an end result that will be a reference for how you will improve and change. In my next article, I will discuss *Step 2. Identifying the Factors and Behaviours Critical to Your Success*, focusing on HOW to direct your energy in order raise your level of performance and fulfillment in all of your activities and how to implement more effective behaviours day-to-day.