



SMALL INCREMENTAL STEPS

Success in any industry results from compound interest. You have to do the right things right, but more importantly; you have to do them frequently. Success is out there for anyone to achieve, but you can only do it through process and effort. Eliminate the gap between wanting to do something and actually doing it.

Take small incremental steps every day. In looking at my own practice, the four elements outlined below have proved to be important in achieving success, and they too can add a cutting-edge advantage to your practice:

1. Control Interruptions

We live in a world of interruptions — instant messaging, emails, phone calls and someone simply walking through the door. While these interruptions can lead to potential business, they still remove you from what you were working on. **Take control of the distractions that are destroying your productivity** by trying these useful tips:

- Schedule a specific time to answer emails and text messages. Make sure to let your clients know that you may not respond instantly. They will appreciate your time management.
- Get to the office an hour earlier to organize, goal-set and plan out your day or weeks ahead. This can eliminate you having to take time out from the middle of your busy workday.
- Give yourself one hour away from the computer. The internet can be a huge distraction. A new app called *Freedom* temporarily disables your network. You won't be able to visit websites, send or receive email or anything else internet related for a self-selected amount of time, which will allow you to focus on what's at-hand.

2. Be an Early Riser

It's no surprise the early bird schedule is the routine for many successful people. Research shows that, in fact, **early risers are more productive.** Early in the morning is commonly the most quiet and uninterrupted time of the day, which allows you to completely focus. It is possible for those less inclined to become early risers with a little willpower strengthening. Willpower is a muscle that can be exercised and made stronger every day. **Try it for a month and see what happens.** Let's look at what makes early risers so successful:

- **More Proactive** — Early risers start their day by listing and prioritizing tasks they want to accomplish. This helps them identify their long-range goals, and feel in charge of making things happen.
- **Anticipate Problems** — According to Harvard biologist Christoph Randler, "morning people" are more likely to anticipate problems and minimize them, which leads to more success.
- **Exercise** — Most people, who are committed to daily exercise, do it in the morning. Regular exercise boosts mood and provides energy on the job, and helps create deeper sleep cycles.

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Michael Morrow, CFP

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SMALL INCREMENTAL STEPS CONTINUED

3. Embrace Technology

Technology can be a friend and an enemy. If you can keep it from being a distraction and use it to your advantage, it really makes **life easier, more effective and successful**. Take control of technology and reap in its benefits by:

- **Developing a website.** The number one rule is to make sure you keep your site simple and easy to navigate around. Your company address and phone number should be located on the homepage, and your team's photos with a brief job description should be easy to find. Don't populate your site with a lot of content - the most important message to share is how your expertise will help solve clients' financial needs and wants.
- **Getting on social media.** If you haven't joined the masses on social media, recognize that it is only a matter of time. Social media is an easy way to stay in touch with clients. LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook are a wonderful place to socialize, share information and find out about your clients' life events. Being regularly engaged with clients is critical to long-term relationships.

4. Sharpen Your Skills

Any skill requires maintenance and ongoing development. You should never lose sight of the importance of improving your skills. **When was the last time you read a book on selling?** Start improving your skills today by:

- Revisiting and reacquainting yourself with basic selling skills and strategies. You can dig out old conference audios and books for a quick refresher.
- Buy a new industry book to keep up-to-date on the latest strategies and techniques to inspire you to greater heights.
- Listen to educational audio programs in your car.
- Attend industry conferences regularly.
- Providing technology training for your employees. We recommend Lynda.com, it provides training tutorial for every imaginable technology application.

Many people get discouraged from taking actionable steps because it takes so long to actually see results. We all want to make positive changes but sometimes the challenge seems insurmountable. You can harness power in your business, with a little patience. If you **take small strides every day** in the areas outlined above, you will be on your way to making you an even more productive, successful and efficient professional than you were the day before.

You cannot achieve success by waiting for something to happen — you have to make it happen. Someone who is much smarter than me once said, **"You don't succeed all at once and you don't fail suddenly."**

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Michael Morrow, CFP doesn't just talk marketing; he has been a Financial Advisor for 25 years. He understands the importance of client appreciation and the power of marketing strategies. Mike is an International Speaker who shares his award-winning ideas all over Canada, The United States, Mexico, Asia, Australia and New Zealand and at Million Dollar Round Table events, including The 2012 MDRT Experience and The 2012 and 2009 MDRT Annual Meeting.

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