

Shooting for the Stars ...

The fifth in this soft skill series, looks at Strategies for achieving Success, with an eye on helping Candidates ace their Exams.

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Measure for Success

Great achievers know what success looks like, how to gauge their progress, and the instruments & tools they require. They evaluate how far (and how well) they have travelled. They also assess what else is needed to maintain momentum, and reach their envisioned destination.

They are clear in selecting a range of measures appropriate for the type of successes they desire. For example for physical achievements, measures might focus on going higher, deeper, longer, or quicker. Alternately, they might just measure accomplishment; simple completion or arrival.

When striving for emotional outcomes, they might look at ability to demonstrate trust, build relationships, show empathy, or even, create deep harmony.

For cognitive challenges, they might measure raw knowledge or understanding, ability to apply skills or analyse situations, or perhaps, synthesise new concepts or critically evaluate ideas.

For Singapore QP Candidates, professional examinations are one of the tools used to assess progress. Yet, not everyone loves exams, do they?

Exams may be seen by some as their “day of reckoning”; that moment in time when their past catches up with their present, in ways that can undeniably determine their future.

Yet stepping back, achieving examination success is not too dissimilar from a need to deliver a successful project, or wish to accomplish a personal goal, is it? Managing critical resources is the biggest challenge in all three; there seldom seems to be sufficient time, and it always feels like there is too much stress.

So what can you do to address these issues?

Know What's Important

The world famous French cyclist Bernard Hinault is no stranger to success at the highest level. Bernard won the Tour de France yellow jersey five times. He also won the green points jersey, the polka dot mountain classification jersey, as well as the grand tours of Spain and Italy.

He said that at the “most important moments” in a ride, great riders are “present”. To Bernard, success incorporates two vital ingredients. First, knowing what those “most important moments” are. And second, knowing how to become and stay “present”.

Though we may not be cyclists, we each are running our own race, reaching out for our own life goals, aren't we? Whether these are personal goals, project deliverables, or professional exams, we all need to break down our “race”, and establish those aspects that truly are, the “most important”.

Discovering the “important” things requires a little planning and preparation. Enabling yourself to be “present” at those moments requires some strategies, as well as plenty of practice.

Let's explore six strategies adopted by successful people as they strive to become “present”.

Practice the Six Ps for Presence

#1: Personal Choice

Achievers typically drive toward their success. They clarify what that success will look like once they attain it, set themselves lofty goals, and, know how to evaluate and assess progress.

They choose to act in balanced ways, and understand the consequences of those choices. They plan the journey and execute their strategies with desire, dedication and determination.

#2: Perfectionism

Achievers reach for the stars and aim high. Yet, they recognise the price and peril in perfection. They strive instead for excellence, intentioned to match, then exceed, their personal best.

They know that a good plan well executed today, usually wins out over a great plan that never quite begins to start getting executed tomorrow, or possibly, the day after that, perhaps ...

#3: Procrastination

Achievers don't delay. They are clear on the costs of procrastination and take action in the present. They value & invest their precious hours, rather than commoditise & expense them.

They understand the time value of money, as well as the money value of time. They create a time budget for activities, and always check that what they are currently doing, has time budget.

#4: Prioritisation

Achievers succeed by concentrating their limited resources on the things that matter most to their goals. They do the things that are most important to them, rather than urgent for others.

They know their mind is freest to pinpoint, plan and prioritise important tasks before they begin. That said, their early planning also enables them to maintain flexibility as their race unfolds.

#5: Protection

Achievers prepare well for success and diligent prosecution of strategies. Yet, they know that in moments of high pressure or fleeting weakness, it can be easy to get side-tracked off their goals.

They therefore go create their own "To-Don't" list, some people even call it an "Avoid At All Costs" list. They use this to identify and ignore anything that might wean them off their intended aims.

#6: Perseverance

Achievers know that though storms rage and unexpected things happen, they will still triumph. They keep going because like Steve Jobs, they believe 50% of success stems from perseverance.

Yes, they may first react. But then, they reflect, they revise, and they will act once more. They have that valuable attribute we call "bounce back ability" in abundance; they are resilient.

So, whether it's a personal goal, a project at work, or a professional qualification, plan well, aim high, execute strategically. Know what's most important, and be ever "present". Do these things and more likely than not, you'll achieve your lofty aims, and reach your shooting star.

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