

**Making 2014 Your Quantum Leap Year!**

***But - Are You Willing to Pay the Price of Success?***

By Jon Bartos

It’s a new year, and there is resolution in the air. With a new year comes a fresh start, and new opportunities. Many people will set lofty personal and professional goals in the upcoming first weeks of 2014 in hopes of changing their lives and careers in significant ways. Unfortunately, very few of us will actually manage to achieve these goals or to even remember what goals were set come March 1st.

Hopes and dreams can disappear all too quickly. Life gets busy, work gets harder, problems arise and you are left feeling further away than ever from meeting your goals and resolutions. Does this sound familiar? Do you begin every year full of anticipation, only to surrender to the daily hustle?

*Ask yourself:*

*Am I content to live the same life, to perform at the same level, day after day, year after year?*

*Or*

*Am I really ready and determined to make a significant change? A Quantum Leap?*

If you answered yes on the last question, this is your year, the year to make it happen. The Quantum Leap year. This can be the real first year for the rest of your life. And now is the perfect time to set and actually begin to exceed personal and professional goals. I’ve got the secret. I know how top achievers attain their goals, no matter how big or bold they are. It’s simple. They pay the price of success!

What does it mean to pay the price of success? It means you know what to do. You have the desire to do it. You are willing to do it. You are able to do it. And finally, you get in there and do it!

In the search and staffing business, having high activity levels is an undisputed universal truth. If you can connect with candidates and clients more often every day, you’ve got a very good chance of being successful in our industry. But do we do it?

At a speech recently, I asked about 350 Account Executives, “Can we all agree that 3 to 4 four hours per day of phone time is critical to our success?” Three hundred and fifty hands shot into the air. I followed with, ―How many of you actually hit four hours of phone time per day?‖ Just three hands went up. Three people out of 350, yet every single person in that room knew what they needed to do. *They just didn’t do it. For whatever reason!*

It can be tempting to take shortcuts, to ignore your instincts about success. A personal example: a few years ago my office was hovering around 3.0 hours average daily phone time. My goal for each individual was 4 hours per day, and two people were hitting it regularly, two phone-time heroes. But the majority of my team was just getting by with the minimum. A new recruiting manager came to me and suggested that we lower the phone-time goal to 3.0 hours per day to make everyone feel better. Against my better judgment (remember know what to do and do it?) I agreed. Two months into this idea and our pair of phone-time heroes continued to perform well. Everyone else in the office dropped to an average of just 2.5 hours per day. I admitted my mistake, and realized people tend to perform at or below minimum expectations for success in all areas of their lives. As a business owner, someone who is dedicated to training and delivering top achievers, I’ve thought long and hard about why this is. The answers I’ve found can serve as a road map to success.

***1. Society Has Begun to Accept, and Expect, Under Performance***

This is the era of participation awards. Sports, schools, jobs… they all reward participation versus real achievement. Just showing up should not be cause for celebration. Yet today parties are thrown for graduating fifth grade. Trophies are handed out to every member of the team instead of honoring top performers. Society seems to value mediocrity. At soccer games at our local junior high school, they don’t display the true final score of a soccer game if one team won by more than five goals. School officials don’t want players and their parents to feel badly. Are you outraged? You should be. Because it isn’t just kids’ soccer we’re talking about. It’s establishing the false premise that ―average is acceptable.‖The truth is there are winners and losers in life. In the real world, we don’t get to choose to acknowledge only the scores we like. We aren’t rewarded for simply participating. It’s all about getting the job done better. Don’t ever let it be okay for you or your office to be just average.

***2. We Don’t Know What to Do***

You can’t win the game if you don’t know the rules. To be successful in business—and recruiting—you’ve got to know you’re doing. If you don’t understand how to make an effective marketing call, or how to set up a metrics system to manage your recruiting office, you’d better find out. It isn’t enough to just say you want to succeed. You need to learn everything there is to know about recruiting. I often wonder if people studied more in high school or college than they do when learning their profession. You need to take every day in the office as seriously as final exams in college. If you are primed with in-depth professional knowledge, you can’t fail. You need to be a student of the game, obtaining all the information you can to help you be more successful at what you do.

As recruiters, we have so many great resources. The Fordyce Letter, NAPS, ASA – all have wonderful training programs and fantastic coaches are available to you that can give you valuable, continuing education and mentoring. Don’t let lack of knowledge stop you from achieving your goals.

***3. We Know What to Do, Know How to Do It, But Don’t***

Many people know exactly what to do, and exactly how to do it. Yet they simply choose not to. It’s always surprising to me to see great recruiters show up to work with NO plan for the day. I guess that’s why we have superstars. Because they are in the minority… they always get the job done, no matter what. The average performer knows very well he should plan for the next day before leaving the office. But there’s always a reason it’s more important to walk out the door at 5 p.m. today than to plan to be successful for the next.

It’s sort of like grabbing that second doughnut in the office break room. Everyone says they want to be healthy. Everyone knows they shouldn’t eat junk and sit around playing video games instead of going to the gym. But many, many of us are unwilling to apply what we know and execute it by working out and eating right.

Unfortunately, the cost of failure in life is much bigger than whether or not you look fit in your suit. When you fail to achieve career success, it affects not only you, but your kids, your spouse, and your friends. If you choose not to pay the price of success, you fail, and it can quickly become a habit. Repeated over and over, dreams become distant prayers and your true potential never materializes. A lot of things can happen along with habitual failure, none of it is good.

One in ten new Account Executives and Search Consultants make it to their one year anniversary in recruiting. That means 90% of the people fail in this business. Staggering isn’t it? It sounds like the odds are against you, but the good news is, there is a way to dramatically increase your chance of success for every new recruiter or struggling veteran.

***4. Define Success and Set Your Goals***

Before you can succeed, you need to define exactly what that means to you. At the beginning of each year, my entire team and I write our personal score cards. We reassess all areas of our lives including: personal, financial, career, material possessions, spirituality and giving. We set or adjust goals for the year based on what we hope to make happen in the New Year. Being a great leader isn’t about what I want my employees to achieve, what matters is how I help them achieve their own goals.

Remember, success cannot be defined by a manager, your wife, or your buddies. That is up to you, and you alone. Start putting your personal scorecard together today to help define what you want to accomplish. If you need an example of a personal scorecard, go to www.jonbartos.com.

***5. Identify Your Weaknesses***

You know the old adage: Nobody’s perfect. Take a look at yourself in an objective way. Make a list. Identify your weaknesses and develop an action plan detailing how you will attain the skills and information you need to improve and get to the top of your game. How is your planning? Are you meeting your goals for calls per day and phone time? Do you have an in-depth knowledge of your niche? How are your selling and closing skills? Are you managing your employees well? Never let yourself get too satisfied. Be a seeker: keep abreast of the latest professional trends and pertinent information to make sure you are constantly getting better at what you do.

***6. Get a Performance Coach***

Coaching isn’t just for Tiger Woods. Coaching today is available to everyone who wants to get better at their chosen endeavor. Coaches can help you solidify your life and business vision, create the right business model, help you structure your time so you are spending time on the right things as well as hold you accountable. Not to mention the skill set enhancements from personal training and development for you and your team. Studies have shown that coaching is proven to have over a 600% return on investment. I focus on getting my coaching clients between 25 and 100 times return on their coaching investment. Coaching for me has also proven to be the best money I have spent in my entire life time.

***7. Learn from Your Mistakes***

Sometimes the worst times are the best times to ask yourself the hard questions. If you’ve gone the entire day, week or even month without achieving a specific goal – ask yourself why. What was I doing between calls? Why didn’t I get that send out? Why didn’t the candidate accept the offer? How could I have avoided that? How can I make sure it never happens again? Be willing to evaluate your performance and make changes. It is the fastest way to achieve your goals.

***8. Redefine Your Comfort Zone***

People tend to hang out in their comfort zone. If a recruiter is uncomfortable marketing and not seeing a lot of success, it is natural to begin to do less marketing, with the result being little to no improvement. Recruiters who are uncomfortable qualifying and pre-closing candidates need to force themselves to go through these steps repeatedly to improve their skills. Every one of us needs to push ourselves to reach new professional comfort levels so that we see measurable improvement in our performance. When we get comfortable with that which once made us uncomfortable, we get stronger.

***9. Get Personal Leverage***

What is leverage? Any constraint that makes backing away much more difficult. You may think it sounds foolish to put unnecessary constraints on your actions, but in reality it can give you new professional freedom. Leverage may be the best way to overcome psychological barriers that prevent you from staying focused. There are many different ways you can create leverage. Start by defining your motivation for achieving your goals. My friend Kent Burns from MRI wrote a great book entitled, ―What’s Your Why?‖ His premise: if you can define the reason to achieve a goal, you will be much more committed to it. Is it your career, your family, your kids? You need to know what is driving you to make it happen.

*A few tips to create personal leverage:*

* Make a written commitment, establishing exactly what you will do on a daily basis. Put in writing the specific number of calls you will make a day, or your daily phone time goals. When things are in writing, instead of just mental notes, they tend to happen.
* Tell a friend or find an accountability partner. Now that you’ve written your objectives down and created a good why, enlist others to help you stay on track. This person must be someone who will be supportive and who has an understanding of the business, but also someone who won’t let you off the hook if you start to waver.
* Establish short-term commitments. These can be much stronger than long-term goals. They allow you to focus your efforts and get great momentum early on. Short-term commitments could include calls per day, marketing presentations per day or job orders per week. It is about establishing a new pattern of behavior and that can be very powerful.
* Reward yourself for small victories and achievements. When you find yourself meeting daily or weekly commitments, treat yourself to something special. You need to start feeling good about your successes, to condition your body and mind to winning. Repeated small success will end in big successes. Reward yourself. Then get right back into the game and achieve more.
* By the same token, punish yourself for not achieving results. Yes, it’s the pain and pleasure principle. Wiser men than I have put forth that human beings are far more motivated by pain than pleasure because it is linked more closely to survival. While getting a big check in or placing a senior executive is exciting and motivating, a loaded gun pointed at your head is even more so. Think of some small negative rewards for not achieving results. ―If I don’t hit my sendouts for the week, I will run an extra five miles over the weekend.‖ Or ―If I don’t meet my phonetime today, I will go to work an hour early the next day.‖ Punishment can be a very effective way to keep you on track.

***10. Believe that Failure Is Not an Option***

When you don’t accept failure as a possibility, you can’t lose. This is a powerful rule to live by. Napoleon Bonaparte used this to his advantage. When sending his soldiers into war, he instructed them to burn their ships upon arrival. They were left with no option but to attack the enemy and win because there could be no retreat. Apply this to your life and you will be amazed. When failure is not an option, people will do whatever it takes to succeed.

2014 can be your quantum leap year. But you have to be willing to pay that price of success. he difference between a life well lived and a life half lived is as simple as a decision. Whether or not you choose to pay the price of success can determine whether at the end of the day you look back on your life with joy or regret.

Now you know what to do. You’re willing to do it. Now get in there and do it. I guarantee a year from now you’ll thank me. ☺

*Jon Bartos is a writer, speaker and consultant on all aspects of human capital and personal achievement. As president and CEO of Jonathan Scott International in Ohio, Jon achieved industry-leading success by establishing JSI as a top 10% executive search and contract staffing firm within a few years. JSI won over 17 international awards in the MRINetwork. Also Jon is part of an elite group of executive recruiters who billed over $1 million annually. In a 10 year period (1999–2009), he cashed in over $10 million in personal production. Jon sold Jonathan Scott International in December of 2012 to trustaff where he currently holds the title of President of trustaff Solutions in Cincinnati, Oh..*

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