

# SMALL PRACTICE BUSINESS UPDATE

## PERSONAL PRODUCTIVITY AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT: THE ROAD TO SUCCESS



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**Leaders are made, not born. All of us can develop the necessary characteristics to achieve and live a lifetime of success. This requires each of us to deliver on the principles of personal growth and development, writes Maurice Cullen.**

A bit of ancient wisdom says, “If you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what you’ve always gotten.” This means that if you want to improve your life in any way, you must change your behaviour. It also suggests that you can take control of your life and, by changing your behaviour, direct yourself toward the goals and objectives that are important to you.

However, it does take self-awareness to develop and change (and often some help and support to follow through with the changes).

The principal building blocks in developing to your full potential – leading yourself and others – and becoming a ‘total leader’ are:

### 1. Personal productivity

Personal productivity is the foundation of everything. It is the ability to manage yourself, manage your time, and manage your priorities to operate at maximum performance. Take the time to plan each day – prioritise your imperative actions and schedule time to complete them.

Know your high payoff activities (the activities that really deliver for you in your role). Know your low payoff activities (the activities that may need to be done but that don’t contribute significantly to your output). How can you spend more time in high payoff activities and less time in low payoff activities?

It is only when you can optimise your own performance that you are truly able to increase the performance of those around you.

### 2. Personal leadership

‘Personal leadership’ is the ability to lead yourself, to be a leader of your own life. Most people just let life happen to them and then suffer the consequences. Personal leaders determine the life they want and then, through planning and action, make it happen. Personal leadership is the core of an individual’s character and the basis for developing trusting relationships that are vital to living a full life.

### 3. Motivational leadership

‘Motivational leadership’ is the capability to lead and motivate others. A motivational leader understands that people are the source of all progress and innovation, and thus are the key to business success. Inspiring motivation in others is crucial to developing a productive and engaged team. A motivational leader is able to help people develop and use more of their full potential.

### 4. Strategic leadership

‘Strategic leadership’ is the ability to lead an organisation. A strategic leader works through teamwork and collaboration to define and develop the purpose of the organisation, the key strategies, the optimum structure, the right people in the right roles, and the most effective processes for an organisation to succeed. Strategic leadership is not only setting the course, but also following through and executing the plan to completion.

A ‘total leader’ excels in all four areas. However, the starting point is always with yourself – your

self-management and your ability to set your own course.



## SETTING PRIORITIES

To practise self-management and start setting your own course, you need to heighten your self-awareness. To do this, you need to step off the hamster wheel and take time to think and plan!

The successful person is the average person focused. You become focused when you set yourself goals. Successful people set goals, and they make certain all their actions and activities contribute to the achievement of their goals. They take action in a logical, reasonable, and organised manner to attain the results they have identified as important to them. Successful people increase their productivity through controlling their priorities.

You are a complex, unique individual. Part of your complexity stems from the fact that you fill many roles in life and possess numerous needs and desires that grow out of your unique potential. Your needs and desires are best fulfilled by using your potential to be as productive as possible in your business pursuits. You will be more productive over a long period of time and find greater satisfaction in your accomplishments when you establish priorities in all areas of life.

Enhance your productivity and your enjoyment of life by keeping all areas of your personal and business life in proper perspective and by setting priorities in each one:

- *Financial and career.* Exercise the same careful watch over your personal financial affairs as you demand in your business. Consider the effect of finances on your ultimate career goals and priorities.
- *Physical and health.* Successful people take care of themselves physically; they know a healthy body supports an active and creative mind and turns stress into a motivating force for achievement. Set a high priority on eating nutritious meals, exercising, and getting enough rest to be as productive as possible.
- *Family and home.* Make your family and home life more rewarding by giving to it some of the energy you save through better organisation at work. Spend quality time to maintain meaningful relationships with all members of your extended family.
- *Mental and educational.* Continue to grow in knowledge of your career field and knowledge of the world in general. Read something every day that stimulates you to think about important ideas.
- *Spiritual and ethical.* Give attention to becoming the kind of person you want to be and to the values you want to demonstrate in your life. Give back to others. Find some cause greater than yourself and support it with your time, money, and influence.





## WORKING DURING A PANDEMIC

These goals will give us our focus, but we must guard against distractions that may be brought about by isolation and lack of social interaction – a particular issue during the pandemic.

According to [Future Workplace](#), “The biggest issue most people are facing on a daily basis – no matter who they are, how much money they make, or how they identify – is isolation.” To fight the distraction of isolation, we need to balance our need for focus with our need for socialisation. This means making time and planning to connect personally with people, not just defaulting to impersonal communication.

We all need to reflect on our existing behaviours (habits of action), retain those that are useful (probably most of them), and change those that are holding us back. However, behavioural change will only come about through *attitudinal* change, whereby we change our habits of thought. This requires a structured and disciplined approach over a sufficient period of time to establish new behaviour patterns, typically two to three months. Many people find it beneficial to sign up to a programme with the support of others and a proven process.

## INVEST IN YOURSELF

Investing in yourself to assess your future goals and to work on a plan to achieve them will lead to more fulfilment and success than you might imagine possible. And success will come not just on the achievement of your goals. You will feel (and indeed become) successful once you embark on your plan to achieve those predetermined goals. You will become a master of your own destiny and a master of yourself.

*For over 50 years, Leadership Management Ireland (LMI) has run innovative programmes shaped by real-world experience to help people develop and reach their full potential. The world-class process used delivers guaranteed success. See [www.lmi.ie](http://www.lmi.ie) for more information, or contact Maurice directly on tel: 087 280 0349 or email: [maurice@lmi.ie](mailto:maurice@lmi.ie).*

## CONTACT

Small Practice Support,  
Law Society of Ireland,  
Blackhall Place, Dublin 7

T: +353 1 672 4800

E: [smallpractices@lawsociety.ie](mailto:smallpractices@lawsociety.ie)