



INNOVEST SME
Accelerating Small Business

Proactivity *and* Initiative

Rick Chisholm and Tala Chisholm

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Copyright © 2018 by Innovest SME

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law. Permission requests should be submitted to the publisher in writing at one of the addresses below:

30/192A Kingsgrove Rd
Kingsgrove, NSW 2208
Australia

Phone: +61 2 8007 2907

E-mail: admin@innovestsme.com.au

Website: www.innovestsme.com.au

CONTENTS

	Preface	5
1	What is Initiative?	8
2	Take a Chance	14
3	Recognize When You Can Step In	20
4	Recognize When You Can Go Outside the Normal	26
5	Weighing the Consequences	33
6	Good or Bad	40
7	Confidence	47
8	Find Opportunities	53
9	Be Persistent	60
10	Balance Initiative and Restraint	66

*The best way to predict the
future is to create it.*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

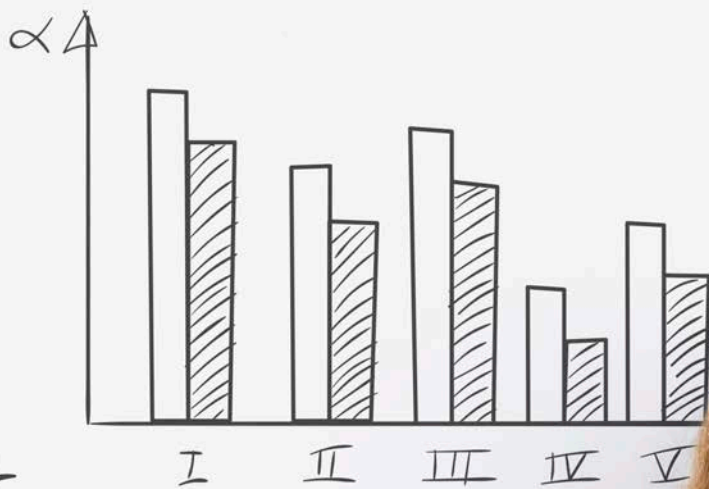
PREFACE

From before we start our first job, we often dreamt about what career we wanted to have when we grew up. Soon, we start the journey to find the job we want to have and discover ways to make it happen. But that's only half the battle. Once you've landed the job you want, you have to know ways to not only stay in your job field, but also excel in it.

*Initiative is doing the right
thing without being told.*

VICTOR HUGO

X	XI	Y
A		



\$



O.K



WHAT IS INITIATIVE?

Initiative is something we can all use in our careers. It is what sets us apart from others and our competition. Many people are afraid to take the initiative, but if you can, you will stand out. Initiative is deep down inside all of us, but the successful ones are the ones who use it.

DEFINITION

It is important to know what initiative is to properly utilize it. Initiative is defined as the ability to assess and initiate things independently. In other words, it is taking advantage of the opportunities in front of you. It is stepping up, and going beyond your typical duties. Take charge of situations before others do. You may not want to step out of your comfort zone, but usually you will be rewarded for doing so. It is thinking outside the box, preparing for success, capitalizing on opportunities. It is making changes to take a step forward and being persistent.

BENEFITS, PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL

In life, taking initiative offers many benefits. It is a positive step that anyone can take for themselves. Only you can take the initiative for yourself, so ensure you do it. Taking the initiative provides individuals with a sense of self-control both in their personal and professional lives. No one is going

to offer you opportunities if you do not deserve them, so stepping up will make all the difference in your life. In your personal life, it may benefit you by helping you feel more confident with yourself. In your professional life, it may help you get that coveted promotion. In either aspect of your life, it will promote better things.

Taking initiative promotes:

- Control
- Achievement
- Confidence
- Proactivity
- Inspiration
- Self-Awareness
- Creativity
- Fear-busting

WHY PEOPLE DO NOT TAKE INITIATIVE

Not everyone is comfortable with taking the initiative, or even knows how to do so. It is something that is developed mentally and takes strength to do. Some individuals have a bounded rationality. These individuals are unable to see past what they currently know. They cannot see the benefits of stepping up. Typically, the individual has never thought about it. Also, individuals do not take the initiative due to a lack of capability. Outside

their general knowledge, some individuals do not possess the expertise to take the initiative for a more difficult task. Execution over innovation is also another popular reason that individuals do not take initiative. These individuals only focus on their own work, and do not have concern for any new tasks. Finally, some individuals are too busy to take the initiative. There is already too much on their plate, and they physically and mentally cannot process anymore work.

Reasons for not taking the initiative:

- Bounded rationality
- Lack of capability
- Execution over Innovation
- Task overload

MAKE INITIATIVE A PRIORITY

It is our duty to make initiative a priority in both our professional and personal lives. To make initiative a priority, we must first understand what it is and what its benefits are. Once we understand this, we can take the leap forward. To make taking initiative a priority, we must watch for opportunities. We must be aware of our surroundings, and what can potentially be a fantastic opportunity to do so. In your professional career, if you see that your boss needs help with something, offer it! Show that you are a go-getter. Take the extra step when you can! People will take notice of your initiative, and you will be rewarded positively.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Jennifer and Angela are both employees at a company. They both started at the same time, and hold the same position. A new promotional position has opened up with the company, and their supervisor says he will be making a decision soon about who he thinks will be the best fit for it.

Both Jennifer and Angela perform their jobs to the best of their abilities. They both complete their assignments on time. The difference is, Jennifer knows the importance of taking initiative at the workplace. Jennifer has noticed that several of her superiors have needed help on projects, and Jennifer has taken the time to help. In her time helping her superiors, she has learned valuable information that will help her succeed in the promotional position. Angela, on the other hand, is focused on only doing her work to the best of her ability. She does not think helping others will help her in any way.

After about two weeks, the supervisor made his decision on the position. Jennifer was given the position. The reasoning was because the supervisor noticed the initiative she had taken, and took that into consideration. The only thing that separated the two candidates was one took initiative to help others in a higher position and the other did not.

*If it scares you, it might be
a good thing to try.*

SETH GODIN



TAKE A CHANCE

Life is about chances. Even if you are not ready to take a chance, just do it. It may change your personal and professional life in a positive way. Taking chances is what life is all about, and to get ahead you need to take that risk. Step outside of your box, and take that chance.

BE OPEN MINDED

One of the most important tools you have for taking the initiative is being open-minded. A closed mind limits your productivity, but an open mind gives you limitless opportunities. To grow successfully, you should always be open to learning. Learning new things can never harm you, it will only benefit you. Once you are able to let go, and be open-minded, you will be able to change your life for the better.

There are many benefits of having an open mind in the workplace. They include:

- Being able to let go of control
- Being able to experience changes in a positive manner
- Strengthening yourself
- Gaining confidence

BE ADAPTABLE

When taking initiative, it is important to be adaptable to any situation you may come across. When you can adapt to various situations, you can accomplish more. Adaptability is the ability to change to the given circumstance. All people have the basic capability to be able to adapt. It is part of human nature.

Examples of being adaptable at work:

- Able to follow new policies and procedures.
- Being able to adjust workload based on new, high priority assignments

Benefits of being adaptable at work:

- More valuable to your employer
- Makes you a better leader
- Better equipped to handle career transitions
- Bounce back quicker from adversity

MAKING DECISIONS

All jobs typically involve making decisions. It is your duty to determine if it is a good decision or bad decision. Making good and successful decisions not only will help your workplace, but it will also make you look good. Supervisors appreciate employees who take the initiative and make good decisions.

Bad decisions do not make you look good to your superiors. Making bad decisions can limit upward mobility in your career. To help avoid making bad decisions, it is important to think about your decisions before you make them. Think about the possible outcomes and determine the best route from there.

When making decisions in the workplace:

- Get perspective on how important the decision is
- Consider a variety of options
- Ensure you have all the facts
- Include the right people in the decision making process

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

When you take initiative, you must take the responsibility for your actions. For the most part, taking initiative brings positive outcomes. Remember that you cannot make excuses for your actions. If you make a decision, take responsibility for it. You need to eliminate blame in your actions, and eliminate excuses. If you do not do this, it means you are shifting responsibility for your decisions to others. Taking responsibility can be difficult, but in the long run it will be beneficial to you and others in the workplace.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Katie and Michelle are working on a major project for work. After spending hours working together on the documents, the two have now set separate responsibilities. Katie has taken the responsibility of putting the documents all together. Michelle has taken the responsibility of proofreading and ensuring the document is complete after Katie has finalized her portion. Both employees have now completed their portion of the assignment. Katie and Michelle have turned in the document to their supervisor. The supervisor has found several grammatical errors and that there is a missing document. The supervisor is planning on writing both employees up for the poorly done assignment. Michelle knows the problem should have been taken care of on her end. Michelle knew she had to take the responsibility for her mistake, so Katie was not blamed. Michelle talked to the supervisor and told her that the problem was her error and that she would quickly correct it. The supervisor was impressed with Michelle's initiative of taking responsibility and agreed to let her have a second chance to fix it. Neither was punished.

*The world is not dangerous
because of those that do
harm but because of those
who look at it without
doing anything.*

ALBERT EINSTEIN



RECOGNIZE WHEN YOU CAN STEP IN

When taking initiative, it is important to understand timing. You need to know the correct time to step up, and when to know your place. If you can make a situation better, you should. Take initiative when you can. Try to make a difference.

KNOW YOUR STRENGTHS AND SKILLS

It is beneficial to your personal and professional self to understand your strengths. Everyone has strengths, and sometimes you just have to explore your natural talents to find them. To help identify what you have strengths in, you should identify what you enjoy doing. The more you enjoy an activity, the more likely you will perform it to the best of your abilities. You should also take the time to notice what you do differently than everyone else. Determine what makes you stand out from a crowd. Take advantage of your strengths and put them to good use.

Positive workplace and personal strengths to possess:

- Creativity
- Honesty
- Leadership skills

- Open mindedness
- Problem solving skills
- Works well in a team or individually
- Well-organized

GO THE EXTRA MILE

Part of initiative is going the extra mile. Take the step of going above and beyond your usual tasks. This will make you stand out, and show motivation. Going the extra mile can be as simple as offering another employee help. Every little bit helps in the workplace, so if you can help out, you should. It will not go unnoticed. Going the extra mile will motivate you and make you feel good about yourself. A little initiative goes a long way.

Ways employees are motivated:

- Getting work benefits for performing well
- Building relationships among staff members
- Knowing why they matter
- Having clear goals set

Reasons why employees may choose not to go the extra mile:

- Lack of recognition
- Lack of progress on tasks
- Being micromanaged

- Lack of growth opportunities
- No trust in leadership

LISTEN CAREFULLY

Take the initiative and be an active listener. Never be a passive listener, it will only make you a passive person. Part of effective communication is listening. A conversation cannot carry on if the parties involved do not hear each other. It is important to listen to the words being spoken, and think about them. Effective listening occurs so we can obtain information. We do it to understand and learn. Effective listening should not only occur in the professional setting, but also personal/home setting.

Ways to be a more effective active listener:

- Face the speaker/Maintain eye contact
- Be attentive
- Keep an open mind
- Do not interrupt
- Ask questions only to ensure understanding
- Being able to experience changes in a positive manner

FILL IN THE GAPS

As an effective employee, you want to step in when you can and help out the workplace. At times you may notice gaps that need to be filled. Gaps can be in a group that needs an extra person to help out to an employee

being absent from work and you need to step up and help out with their duties for the day. Helping fill in the gaps shows initiative. Do what you can when you can. It will show your co-workers and superiors that you are an effective worker. It will make a positive difference in the workplace and in your personal life.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

The supervisor is opening a new position that focuses on problem-solving for the employees. Stacy and Chelsea have both been with the company for about 5 years and are up for the position. They are equally qualified. The supervisor is watching both girls. The supervisor is looking for the candidate who can actively listen and has great communication skills. This position works directly with employees and this person needs to be able to listen to the employees' needs. The supervisor has watched the girls for about a week. He noticed that both women have great verbal communication skills. They are both friendly, but only one actually has the proper listening skills.

When talking to employees, Stacy takes the time to listen to the employee. She does not interrupt, and only asks questions for clarification. She makes eye contact, and ensures her attention is on the employee. Chelsea, on the other hand, speaks great, but does not have great listening skills. She regularly interrupts employees when they are speaking, and she seems to have her focus elsewhere. The decision was made to give Stacy the position, because her listening skills were active and made the employees feel that they were being listened to.

*Unless you try to do
something beyond what
you have already mastered,
you will never grow.*

RALPH WALDO EMERSON



RECOGNIZE WHEN YOU CAN GO OUTSIDE THE NORMAL

Are you in a rut in life or at work? Snap out of it! Although normal is easy and part of our routines, stepping out of our box can make a world of difference. Now the important step is realizing when we can go outside the normal. We need to take the time to figure out when it is appropriate and when it is not. Consider yours and others' cultures and values and see how stepping outside of the normal will be affected by those. Also determine your scope of authority. It may not always be appropriate for you to step outside of the normal. Now, make proper and well-thought out decisions before taking action!

CONSIDER CULTURE AND VALUES BEFORE ACTING

Culture and values play an important part in most people's lives. Culture and values dictate our thoughts, our actions, and how we live day to day. It is something to be taken seriously. Before taking action, we need to always think before doing. This is an important concept that we all should utilize. We should think about the benefits and negatives of our actions. We should consider how it affects people in different ways in both personal values and one's culture.

When acting, consider if the action is neutral to other individual's cultures and values. You need to think are you going to be a prescriptive person that uses their authority to express opinions even if it affects others. You need to determine who you want to be, and if that person will negatively or positively affect others. Is your action going to be encouraging or discouraging to a person and their beliefs? We need to think positive and not only look for the gain that occurs in an action, but how it affects others as well. We need to not judge others, but keep our actions neutral.

Before acting consider:

- Neutral vs. prescriptive actions
- Encouraging vs. discouraging actions
- Judgmental vs. nonjudgmental actions

IS IT IN THE SCOPE OF YOUR AUTHORITY?

Before we can step outside of the normal, we must consider if we should. Is it in our authority to take action in some way or make a comment regarding a situation? We all have places in our job that we need to respect. It shows initiative to work harder than your actual job, but you do not want to go over your supervisor or other head honcho's head. We all have a given or understood scope of authority with our positions. To understand our scope of authority, it is important to understand what it is. It is the power delegated to an employee to carry out business. This is typically assigned by the company or the supervisor. It may be spoken or unspoken terms. We, ourselves, must determine if we are crossing the

line when taking the initiative or doing something positive for the company and/or ourselves.

COMMUNICATE IDEAS

Communication is the key to success. Without proper communication, our ideas will never be heard or be able to flourish. How you communicate your ideas is directly related to the response you get back. Communication is not a one way process and you must consider how the other person perceives you. Enhance communication by using positive qualities when conveying information.

Positive qualities when communicating ideas:

- Being warm, friendly, and open
- Being honest
- Making the idea exciting and interesting
- Being organized when presenting the idea

Negative qualities when communicating ideas:

- Being stiff and stuffy
- Being closed off
- Being patronizing
- Not being fully honest
- Vagueness and irrelevant information
- Being unsure of the idea being conveyed

ACT ON SOLUTIONS

When deciding to act, it is important that you have the proper solution for a cause. Think out your idea. Do not act impulsively. Do not act, just to act. Do your research on the matter and be well-prepared. Once you are ready to act, make sure you put effort into your action. Do not limit yourself. Act so there is a solution. Take the initiative and make a difference.

Before acting on solutions, think about:

- Fixing what you can
- Never blaming others
- Fixing the right problem
- If the problem reoccurs, determine why, and fix it
- Listening to occurs

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Kim and Kacy both work for the same company. They work for their supervisor, Andrew. Andrew encourages ideas, but wants ideas to be discussed with him before taken into action. Kim has been talking to Kacy about ways to improve the workplace and make it more efficient. Kim wants to implement her ideas ASAP, and feels she should be able to implement them because the ideas are well thought out. Kim feels she does not need approval for this.

Kacy told Kim that she is exceeding her scope of authority, and should never go above Andrew's head. Kacy told Kim that Andrew is very open about ideas, but always wants to hear them first to ensure that the ideas are a right fit for the work place. Kim agreed with Kacy. Kim made an appointment with Andrew. Andrew heard the idea and thought it was amazing. He did make certain modifications to it, which made it better. By talking to Andrew first, the idea went up the correct employment chain and the idea was made even better.

*Men of thoughtless
actions are always
surprised by consequences.*

SARAH ADDISON ALLEN



WEIGHING THE CONSEQUENCES

Before any decision is made, always think about the consequences. You should think about the consequences for acting as well as not taking action. Every action has a reaction, remember that. You need to take the time to think about various scenarios and then choose the best route of action for the scenario. Always act wisely.

ASK QUESTIONS

Initiative is important, and so is asking questions. Asking questions can educate you on how well your idea may work. It can provide you with others' opinions as well as information you did not have. Asking questions allows one to make educated decisions on their actions.

When asking questions, it is important to consider:

- Do I need a factually correct response?
- Do I need an expert opinion or a friend's opinion?
- Do I need a well-reasoned judgment?

Asking questions is also important, because it allows you to get different perspectives. Different perspectives may allow you to see different

consequences of your actions that you could not see. Asking questions also allows you to get information about consequences from individuals who may have had similar ideas or experiences.

Types of questions:

- Clarifying questions- Help one better understand what has been stated.
- Adjoining questions- Used to explore related aspects of the issue that have been ignored during communication.
- Funneling questions- Used to dive deeper and gain more information.
- Elevating questions- Used to raise broader issue and see the bigger picture like consequences.

RISK, IMPACT, OR COST ANALYSIS

Take a risk! For a big reward, big risk is typically required. With risk, there is a chance of loss. But without risk, you may never be able to get that big reward.

Reasons to take the risk:

- Unforeseen opportunities come from risk taking
- It shows confidence
- It helps one stand out
- We learn from risks
- Helps one overcome the fear of failure

Reasons we do not take the risk:

- We overestimate the probability of a negative occurrence
- We exaggerate the consequences
- We underestimate our own ability to handle the risk

Once we take the risk, we must consider the impact. If there are consequences, deal with them. Think about the best course of action to take, and take it. Gather information and do what is best.

IS AUTHORIZATION NECESSARY?

Now is the time to think, is it our place to take the initiative in certain situations? Although we may want to, it is not always acceptable for us to. We need to think, should our actions be approved by someone above us? If the answer is yes, it is probably a good idea to get authorization before completing any action, especially one with consequences. Although taking the initiative may seem like a positive thing, it may not be our place and suitable for the situation.

If you think you need to get approval before taking the initiative, there is probably a reason for it. Asking for approval shows that you are responsible in your position as well as shows that you are taking the initiative for an action.

Benefits of having authorization:

- Shared responsibility for consequences
- Others have given input on the action
- Not stepping outside of your position

WHEN RISKS ARE TOO HIGH

Not all risks are worth it. Some risks have more consequences than others. You have to weigh the pros with the cons. Never take a risk that has more cons than pros. We want the risk to provide us an advantage, not a disadvantage.

It is helpful to ask the below questions to determine if it is worth the risk:

- Am I risking more than I am able to give at this time?
- Will I be able to take this opportunity again in the future?
- Are my hesitations based on the unknown or real dangers?
- What other possible opportunities am I risking by taking this risk or not taking this risk?

When maybe taking the risk is not a good idea:

- When you are rushing the idea
- When you are putting your reputation on the line
- When it affects your retirement

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Dean and Kenny are discussing work opportunities. Dean told Kenny that there is a great opportunity for him to take, but the risk is really high. Dean stated if he takes the risk and fails his reputation would be on the line and it would cause a major work setback for not only himself but other employees. Kenny told Dean to ask himself if the risk had too many consequences. Kenny also recommended making a Pros and Cons list. Kenny stated *“Never take a risk that has more negatives than positives.”* Dean agreed with the statement. After making the list, Dean realized that success with the opportunity was low, and not worth the consequences. He knew he would have similar opportunities in the future that would have less risk.

*There is nothing either
good or bad but thinking
makes it so.*

SHAKESPEARE



GOOD OR BAD

Taking initiative can be done for good reasons, but sometimes bad reasons. It can be a good idea or bad idea. When taking the initiative, you need to think about the action all around. Think about why you are doing it and what will happen because of it. You need to take the time to determine where your action will take you and how it will affect others. Taking the initiative is not black and white. There sometimes needs to be a lot of thought that goes into it. Always think before you act, and work to ensure a positive outcome.

THE GOOD

Taking initiative is mostly seen as a positive thing. It can advance you in your career and make a major difference in your professional and personal life. When taking the initiative in the workplace, it can be a life changing experience. It can help you get that promotion you have been wanting or it can greatly help out your co-workers. If you have positive reasons for taking the initiative, it will typically result in advantages for you.

Advantages of taking the initiative:

- Sense of achievement
- Sense of control

- Gained confidence
- You are being proactive
- You are inspiring to others
- Gaining self awareness

THE BAD

We really need to think out our actions before we take them. Not all actions have amazing endings. Some endings are completely different than what we expected. The difficult part of taking initiative is that we really cannot guarantee the ending we expect. We can make educated guesses, but it does not guarantee anything.

Also we need to take initiative for the right reasons. If we do not, it can have negative consequences that not only affect ourselves but others. Doing things for the wrong reasons go against ethical practices of the work environment.

There are also bad reasons for avoiding risks. Below are examples of reasons that we may have come up with that stopping us from taking the risk or initiative. These reasons make us think taking action is a bad thing, but really it is fear that is holding us back.

- “The timing is not right”
- “I tried it before, and it did not work out.”
- “It is a good idea, but circumstances have changed slightly.”

- “I’ll get to it eventually.”
- “If it is not broke, why fix it?”

DEVELOP JUDGMENT

Over time, we learn to develop judgment on whether our actions will result in good or bad results. We will be able to determine if risk is done for the right reasons or we are doing it to adversely affect someone else. Through experience, we are able to develop judgment and skills related to taking risk and the initiative.

Ways to develop judgment:

- Consider all aspects of the issue
- The extent to which the outcome of acting is known
- The degree to which the action is repetitive
- Drawing on previous experience
- Thinking outside of the box
- Feedback from peers and supervisors
- Being aware of bias

When developing judgment, we must also think about the various types of judgment. There are three main types of judgment. They include: action judgment, value judgment, and reality judgment. With this we must think about what type of judgment we need to utilize and when to use it.

Types of judgment:

- Action Judgment: The mental ability for uncoupling elements of an action and recreating it in a new form.
- Reality Judgment: To know when to stop. It means to have judgment of detachment, a clear head, and an objective balance.
- Value Judgment: Knowing when the action is right or wrong.

AVOID ACTING ON EMOTION

We are responsible for our own emotions. We have to control them ourselves. It is not other individual's responsibility to do so for us. Acting on emotion can cause negative outcomes. If we act using emotion, it is normally not a clear action. Emotion, although a good thing at times, can cloud our judgment and cause us to make rash decisions.

Ways to control your emotions:

- Do not react right away- Reacting immediately to an emotional trigger can increase risk of consequences.
- Find a healthy outlet- Manage emotion properly. Talk to peers before making big decisions when emotional.
- Look at the bigger picture- You may not be able to see the bigger picture in the moment, but take a breath and think about how it affects you and others.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Anne and Katie work together. Anne has been expecting a promotion for quite some time. She always takes the initiative and works hard. Katie, on the other hand, has been with the company for 6 months longer, but never takes the initiative. Anne assumed with all of the work that she put in that she would receive the promotion. The promotion was given to Katie with no explanation. Anne told Kelly, another coworker, that she plans on quitting. Kelly told Anne that her decision was based on emotion and she needs to take a step back and really think about the decision. Anne agreed. Anne thought about the decision and decided that she worked too hard to quit. After a few days and calming down, Anne congratulated Katie on her new promotion. Anne continued to work hard after being encouraged by Kelly and received a promotion 1 month later.

*To succeed in life
you need two things:
ignorance and confidence.*

MARK TWAIN



CONFIDENCE

Confidence is important to have in the workplace. It is a feeling of self-assurance. A confident person appreciates their own abilities and qualities. Confidence demands attention, and usually gets it. Having confidence in the workplace is a value tool that can help you get ahead and get you what you want.

ARE YOU CONFIDENT?

Confidence is different for everyone. People are confident in different aspects of their lives, and people lack confidence in different areas as well. There are two things that contribute to self-confidence. They are self-efficacy and self-esteem. A person can gain a sense of self-efficacy by visualizing oneself mastering skills or achieving certain goals. This attribute of confidence is associated with working hard to succeed. Self-esteem also contributes to confidence. It is directly related with how we feel about ourselves and how we think others view us.

Examples of confident behavior:

- Doing what you believe to be right
- Admitting your mistakes and learning from them
- Accepting compliments graciously

Examples of behavior associated with low self-confidence:

- Working hard to cover up mistakes before anyone notices
- Dismissing compliments
- Never leaving one's comfort zone

BUILD CONFIDENCE

It is important to understand that confidence is not something learned, it is a state of mind. Confidence is increased with positive thinking, training, knowledge, and practice. Do not expect to become confident overnight. It takes time and acceptance of one's self.

To help build confidence, it is important to stay away from negativity. You want to have a positive mind set, and negativity in your life will only destroy confidence. It is best to surround yourself with people who build you up and not tear you down.

It is also helpful to change your body language and image to help build confidence. Make sure you have good posture, smile, and make eye contact. It not only will show that you are a confident person, but it will also make you feel better about yourself.

Lastly, never accept failure. Get rid of all the negativity in your head. Work towards meeting your goal. It is a huge confidence builder.

POSITIVE THINKING

Positive thinking can make all the difference in your life. Without positivity, it is very difficult to be a confident person. Positive thinking can increase one's self-esteem. There are two key components of self-esteem. These components are self-image and self-talk. To help with positive thinking, positive affirmations can be used. Tell yourself, "I can do it!" When speaking to yourself with internal dialogue, use the present and personal tenses. Also to help with positive thinking, use positive visualization. Imagine yourself where you want to be. Do not think negatively or like you cannot do something. Positive thinking will make all the difference in your life, and make you a more confident person.

VISUALIZATION

You can raise your confidence with visualization. If you can visualize an accomplishment, then you can do it. If you plan on using visualization to increase your confidence, you will have to improve your self-image. This is done from the inside out. Low self-esteem is usually accompanied by negative visualization, so you must ensure you are working to create a positive self-image. When you are visualizing yourself in a positive way, make sure the view is done from the first person point of you. You need to see yourself through your own eyes and not others.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Kelly and Sam both work for the same company and have been really good friends for years. Kelly has a lot of self-confidence, and feels good

about herself and everything she does. Sam, on the other hand, has not felt too good about herself after making a mistake on a large report and not catching it. It put her and other employees behind for two weeks. As a good friend, Kelly has decided to help Sam build her confidence. Kelly has made it clear that the report is in the past and that Sam needs to move on. She has been teaching Sam different ways to increase her confidence. Kelly has taught Sam how to visualize herself in a positive light and how doing positive things in the workplace helps. After doing these exercises for about a month, Sam has increased her confidence. With the help of her co-worker and self-visualization, Sam is now in a positive place.

*Finding opportunity
is a matter of
believing it's there.*

BARBARA CORCORAN



FIND OPPORTUNITIES

A great quality for employees to have is the willingness to look for and find opportunities. Opportunities are all around us. What matters is that we take advantage of the opportunities in front of us. Try with every opportunity that comes your way.

INTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

Internal opportunities come and go, and you need to be prepared to take on the opportunity. Take the initiative at your place of work, and work your way up the job ladder. Nothing shows initiative like trying and taking the extra step in your job. Internal opportunities allow workers to not only stay at their place of work, but also, typically move to a higher position. One way to get your face out there for opportunities is offering help to your co-workers above, below, and at the same level as you. This shows you are a team player and work well with others. This also shows that you are able to handle more work. Typically with internal opportunities, the opportunity will require more work for you. Also, it is important to make it clear that you're seeking internal opportunities. Make yourself known and your work known. Make people want to work with you. Show that you are willing to learn and are right for the opportunities that become available.

It is helpful to:

- Do more than you are required to
- Think as a team member, not as a single employee
- Share your ideas
- Consider every opportunity
- Always be prepared
- Be self-promotional

EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

Have you ever thought of taking an external job opportunity? Sometimes you can go no further in your job and need to look elsewhere for advancement. External opportunities only come with taking the initiative. You need to take the initiative and look for opportunities yourself. Unless you are lucky, opportunities do not typically come to you. You have to work for them.

When looking for external opportunities:

- Decide what you want
- Pay attention for opportunities
- Be diligent
- Imagine all opportunities

Ways to get external opportunities:

- Look for opportunities
- Get your name out there
- Take the risk
- Keep trying
- Show why you are worth the risk
- Work hard
- Have people that will vouch for your talents

APPLY CORE COMPETENCIES

Core competencies are important to possess. They make us stand out from others. A competency is a specific range of skills, abilities, or knowledge to be able to complete an action to meet the requirements or needs stated. In the workplace, we need to apply core competencies. Depending on our place of work and our position, the core competencies will be different. In general, there are some that apply to most jobs and companies.

General core competencies of a successful worker:

- Communication skills
- Delivers results
- Uses initiative
- Team worker
- Organizational skills

We need to show initiative and show that we are qualified. Working towards meeting core competencies of the workplace will only benefit you. When working towards taking the initiative and applying core competencies it is helpful to:

- Go above and beyond what is expected
- Volunteer for challenging assignments
- Have the confidence to initiative actions without help

WHAT PROBLEMS EXIST, AND WILL THEY GROW?

Problems will always exist. It is our job to determine the problem and fix it. We need to take the initiative and use our problem-solving skills. If we can fix it, we can stop it from becoming a bigger problem.

Steps in the problem solving process:

- Identify the issue- Be clear on what the problem is.
- Understand everyone's interests- Find a solution that suits everyone's needs. Active listening is required for this step.
- List possible solutions- This is when it is crucial to brainstorm and come up with multiple ideas.
- Choose the best option- From the brainstorming, pick the solution that makes the most sense, is going to be most effective, and has the least consequences.
- Implement the solution- Put the solution into place. Make changes if necessary.

It is also important to think about if the problem will get bigger over time or if it will stay as is. This will determine how quickly it needs to be managed. Never let a problem grow. Take the initiative and stop it as soon as possible.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Jamie is tired of her place at work. She feels that she has been in a rut and wants to advance her career. She loves the company, but wants a higher position. Kevin has mentioned that she should look for internal opportunities. Kevin has taken internal opportunities before and his career is quickly moving upward. He mentioned that internal opportunities are given to those who show initiative and that initiative needs to be seen by her superiors. He also mentioned checking the company website or talking to HR for posted internal opportunities. He told Jamie that there are different ways to go about things. Jamie asked Kevin what is the best way to show initiative and get seen by supervisors so she could have growth opportunities. He told her, *“Do more than you are required, think as a team member, share your ideas, and be self-promotional.”* Jamie took the advice and the initiative to make a difference in her work life. Her supervisors quickly took notice, and when an opportunity arose, they offered her the position.

*Ambition is the path to
success. Persistence is the
vehicle you arrive in.*

BILL BRADLEY



BE PERSISTENT

Being persistent is your path to success. Success is based on persistence. You have to work for it. A persistent person has to have discipline. It's important to set goals and follow through with them. Never give up. You will never know what you can accomplish until you work towards a goal.

HANDLE SETBACKS

How you handle setbacks can really define you. It shows how you can take on issues and overcome them. Everyone has to handle setbacks at one time or another. What can make you stand out is handling them responsibly and professionally. You can either look at a situation in an optimistic way or a pessimistic way. If you can keep your mind positive about any situation, you will be alright. For someone that has an optimistic look on a setback, they will look at the situation as temporary. An optimistic person looks towards the future. They look for a plan on how to handle the situation and move on. A pessimistic person, on the other hand, looks at a problem and how it affects their entire life. This type of person makes the situation bigger than it is. A pessimistic person has trouble finding a solution. Which type of person are you, and which type of person do you want to be?

Ways to become a more optimistic person:

- Examine your behavior.
- Be honest with yourself
- Look at the opportunity within each challenge
- Do not let the problem overcome you
- Take action

MANAGE CHANGE

To manage change, you have to be willing and ready to make change. Once you are ready to take the leap and change, you have to learn to keep change. Change can be made in any aspect of your life. It can be made in your professional life or personal life. The most important part of change is being able to keep it and be satisfied with the change.

Here are some tips to help manage and keep changes you have made:

- Make a plan that you can stick to
- Start small
- Make one change at a time
- Get support

MODIFY IDEAS WHEN NECESSARY

Not all ideas will be the greatest. Not all ideas will pan out. Do not get down on yourself if a change in your life does not work out as planned. Look for another route. You can still make that change; you just need to do it in another way that fits you. Change is not easy, remember that. It does not always pan out how we want it to. Part of change is willing to make changes to the actual change we are making. You have to take a serious look at if the change you made is effective and working. You have to be honest with yourself and make changes when you need to.

MOVE FORWARD

In life, whether professional or personal, it is important to move forward. You cannot advance in life, unless you take the step to move in the right direction. Moving on is not just leaving everything behind, it is a conscious effort to make a step to better yourself. Set new goals for yourself. Look forward to the future, and keep a positive mindset. Do not limit yourself. If you believe it, you can do it.

Helpful ways to move forward:

- Believe you are worthy of having better
- Know what you want
- Trust in yourself
- Forget regret
- Learn from your past
- Ask for help

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Sandy is an employee at a successful company. She has been with the company for 4 years, and has never moved to a higher position. Sandy talks to Frances about this a lot. Frances recommended that Sandy makes a change in how she works and her daily schedule. Sandy and Frances brainstormed together. Sandy realized that she needs to make more of an effort in certain aspects of the job. She vowed to step up at work and perform her job beyond the acceptable standards. She did what she set out to do. Her supervisors noticed a major difference, and within 3 months, Sandy was promoted.

*Speak Only if it improves
upon the silence.*

GANDHI



BALANCE INITIATIVE AND RESTRAINT

Part of taking the initiative is knowing when to take action and when to take a step back. You have to know your place in both the professional setting and personal setting. Initiative is not only about going for it; it is also about knowing and understanding the correct timing for it. Know when it is acceptable to take action.

CONSIDER THE WORK INVOLVED IN AN IDEA

Not all ideas will work out how you want them to. Some ideas take more effort to accomplish and some take minimal effort. Not all ideas are created equally. Remember that. Before taking action, you should thoroughly think about what steps are needed to complete an action, how long it will take, and how much effort you will have to exude to accomplish it. Not all goals or tasks are worth the effort. You may decide another route is more realistic. Just because you choose a different route, does not mean you do not have initiative. Remember think things through, before taking action.

DEVELOP EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Have you heard of emotional intelligence before? This term is directly related to the ability to both identify and manage the emotions of yourself and the emotions of others. Emotional intelligence generally involves 3 skills. The first is having emotional awareness. You need to be able to identify yours and others emotions. The next skill is having the ability to harness emotions. Finally the last skill is being able to manage emotions. This involves cheering yourself up or others when needed.

KNOW THE BUY-IN OF STAKEHOLDERS

Knowing where to provide support and where not to is an important attribute to have. It is important to support stakeholders and taking the initiative to do so. We also need to know when it is not our place to support stakeholders. One can use stakeholder analysis to determine the needs of stakeholders.

Benefits of using a stakeholder-based approach:

- Can gain support from powerful individuals
- Can learn and gain the opinions of stakeholders
- Communication ensures that the stakeholders' needs are met

To use the stakeholder approach:

- Identify your stakeholders- Brainstorm who is affected by your work, who has authority over it, and who has interest in it being successful.

- Prioritize stakeholders- Determine who is most affected by your work and who you can support the most.
- Understand the stakeholders' needs- Determine what support is actually needed for each stakeholder. Ask questions like what motivates them?

DO NOT PUSH ALL IDEAS FORWARD

You really need to think about your ideas before moving forward with them. Think about who they will involve, how it will affect you, how it will affect others, how long it will take, and what resources will be needed. Some ideas may not be well thought out. Some ideas just will not fit the situation at hand. Keep coming up with ideas, but only choose to move forward with the best. There are no stupid ideas, but some ideas will work better than others.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Cassie is always coming up with ideas at work. Her ideas are really good, but typically involve a lot of work. The work is typically put on others too. Cassie's ideas typically get put in place, because she has a position of authority. She never really thinks about the work behind the idea, just that she wants it in place. One day Cassie was talking to Sadie (her co-worker) about a new idea she had. Cassie talked about how amazing the idea was. Sadie wanted to know if the idea would have a major or minor impact on the workplace. Cassie thought about it for a moment and the impact would be minor. Sadie also asked Cassie if loads of work would

be placed on other employees for this idea to come into place. Cassie thought about it, and the answer was yes. Sadie told Cassie that she needs to think about the work involved with ideas before putting them in place. Not all ideas are worth it. Many of Cassie's employees are already overwhelmed and putting more of a burden on them would not help. Cassie took Sadie up on her advice. Cassie did not implement this idea, and decided that all ideas in the future would be well thought out. Cassie also decided if she could do the action alone or with minimal support, that would be best course of action for some of her smaller ideas.

*Risk something or forever
sit with your dreams.*

HERB BROOKS

CLOSING THOUGHTS

- **Bo Bennett** “Without initiative, leaders are simply workers in leadership positions.”
- **Ralph Waldo Emerson** “Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow.”
- **Victor Hugo** “Initiative is doing the right thing without being told.”
- **Holbrook Jackson** “Genius is initiative on fire.”



Rick Chisholm made history when he single-handedly changed the professional Audio Visual industry by breaking all the rules and capitalised over 50% market share in Australia with very little capital, no partners, mergers or lenders and set up the first franchise operation of its kind in the world in the late 1990's and early 2000's.

As a 7x founder of companies and 30x businesses such as Innovest, AI Machine, Lightsounds, LSW, Light Emotion with revenue in excess of \$300 million and having employed more than 1,000 staff over the last 35 years. Rick is known as the Start-Up and SME Guru and is Author of a number of books including Business Success for Life. Unlike many mentors, he actually walks the talk and has a number of businesses under management in such areas as Automation, Events management, Importing, Distribution, Retailing and E-commerce.

His BIG passion is Business Education empowering Businesses Owners through knowledge and skills. Whilst Rick has experienced great success, he has also endured many failures. Rick has faced and overcome the exact same challenges you are facing now.



Tala Chisholm is an SME specialist who has owned and managed several small to medium sized businesses in the last 20 years, several of which were eventually sold. She has extensive experience in the fields of retail, franchising, licensing, dealerships, education, importing, distribution and consulting.

Her expertise lies in building and implementing customised cross-platform database and software solutions for businesses, automation, IT, web marketing, advertising, graphic design, business administration, process refinement and implementation. Her business experience ranges from bricks-and-mortar Giftware retailing to highly technical fields such as Security, CCTV, Entertainment Lighting and Audio sales, hire and installations as well as e-commerce.

Throughout her career she also trained and mentored Franchise business owners as well as internal division managers. Some areas of training included retail operations, management practices, business strategy, accounting, cash-flow, marketing, customer service and IT. She has also headed up the drafting of Operating Compliance Manuals for Franchise operations and implementation of all the elements involved.

.....

Phone: +61 2 8007 2907
E-mail: admin@innovestsmc.com.au
Website: www.innovestsmc.com.au