

The Secrets to a Successful Career

by Gene Smith, LPC



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What are the things aspiring loss prevention professionals can do to increase their chances of reaching their true potential? What are the career secrets that our most successful industry leaders all have in common? These are a couple of questions that all of us ask ourselves sometime during our careers. I have been asked these questions many times and, most recently, by someone who suggested I write an article on my thoughts addressing these questions.

With over 25 years of my LP career focused on personal, professional, and career development, I have been fortunate to discuss the career success topic with many successful retail executives, not just LP and asset protection professionals. Here is what they say.

I have seen many average people accomplish some extraordinary things because they believed in themselves and made a plan, worked the plan, readjusted the plan, and reached for the stars.

Able and Willing. Each person must have the basic skills, knowledge, and desire to be successful. Skills and knowledge are different, and you must have both. Learn the difference. If you have the necessary skills for LP and gain the knowledge, you still need to have the desire to apply it. That means putting in the time to do what it takes to achieve each step in the career ladder. Look for extra assignments to do so you do a little more than your peers.

“Knowledge has to be improved, challenged, and increased constantly, or it vanishes.” Peter F. Drucker

Attitude toward Continued Learning. You must accept that you and only you are responsible for your own personal development and not your company. Look for opportunities to learn on your own, whether

it is college courses, professional certifications, industry conferences, seminars, or company-sponsored training. Some great sources include the LPQ and LPC courses.

“The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past.... We cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude.... I am convinced that life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it.” Charles Swindoll

Commitment to Improvement. You must be open to identifying areas in which to improve and seek out resources to help you. Routinely “check your own oil and take your temperature.” Look in the mirror and be honest with yourself. Pick one or two things to work on every six months—not six or eight—just one or two.

Career Plan. It is amazing when I ask someone about their plan to reduce shrink or improve the P&L, they know exactly what needs to be done. But when I ask what their career plan is, they don't really know. Ladies and gentlemen, please sit down and outline where you want to be and how you want to get there. Establish a formal career plan.

Mentorship. Seek out a mentor who has a sincere desire to help you grow and develop. Not everyone makes a good mentor. Find one who you synergize with and copy their style, their philosophies, and apply them. Learn how to give back and become a mentor yourself because it can really serve as a great reinforcement.

Be a Risk Taker. Take calculated career risks with the philosophy that the greater the risk, the greater the reward. Those who keep waiting for the perfect opportunity are the ones who get left in the dust. Taking on an internal project that no one else wants to take on can often impress the right people. Asking to be assigned to the most challenging stores will separate you from your peers in a good way.

Understand Your Customer. Know what your business customer expects from you and deliver that *plus* a little more. Understand what your superior expects and deliver that *plus* a little more. Learn what your retail partners need and deliver that *plus* a little more.

Read, Read, and Read Some More. Those who are always reading and staying current on industry trends acquire knowledge and information that support success. Do you really take time to read *LP Magazine* cover to cover each issue? Do you subscribe to the weekly *LP Insider* e-newsletter sent from the magazine?

Network. Connect with other professionals and use them as resources. Do not try to do everything on your own. Don't wait to network when you need to find a new job. Ask for help and be willing to give back in return. The Loss Prevention Foundation LinkedIn Group, one of the largest networking groups, can assist you in this area.

Intelligence Is Overrated. You do not have to be an Ivy League graduate to reach the top of your career if you master the above points. Mastering these points can allow average people to do extraordinary things. Believe me, I know.

Personal Responsibility. It has amused me how some really intelligent, gifted executives fall short of their true potentials. Invariably, when I have asked them for their thoughts on why they have fallen short, they have a list of excuses a mile long. The reality is they have failed to follow the blueprint above and failed to accept personal accountability for their own success or failures. They always want to blame something or someone for their lack of progression.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are responsible ourselves for our successes and failures—no one else. If you want to reach your true potential, then make a plan. I have seen many average people accomplish some extraordinary things because they believed in themselves and made a plan, worked the plan, readjusted the plan, and reached for the stars.

Newly Certified

Following are individuals who recently earned their LPC and LPQ certifications.

Recent LPC Recipients

Deanna Bandru, LPC, Rite Aid
 Tim Bartkowiak, LPC, Spartan Stores
 Andrew Beno, LPC
 Brian Brewer, LPC, Sobeys
 Byron Burnett, LPC, Harris Teeter Supermarkets
 Joe Camp, LPC, Walgreens
 John Davis, LPC, Walgreens
 Ken Fiori, LPC, Office Depot
 Amber Gerendash, LPC, Walgreens
 Michelle Goodrich, LPC, Ocean State Job Lot
 Robert Hough, LPC, CFI, Dunham's Sports
 Patricia Johnson, LPC, Office Depot
 Naomi Maharaj, LPC, Bell Canada
 Remi Maillet, LPC, Sobeys
 Garrett Mayer, LPC, Best Buy Canada
 Paul McGinley, LPC, Dollar Financial Group
 Warren Najarian, LPC, CFI, Rush Enterprises
 Rich Pitts, LPC, Rite Aid
 Richard Reid, LPC, Ollies Bargain Outlet
 Michael St. Clair, LPC, Staples
 David Ternus, LPC, Walgreens
 Kevin Winters, LPC, Walmart

Recent LPQ Recipients

Anson Aflague, LPQ, Genesco
 Russell Brewer, LPQ, HomeGoods
 Russell Brockett, LPQ
 Sarah Cable, LPQ, Redbox Automated Retail
 Zuzana Crawford, LPQ, eBay
 Julio Cuba, LPQ, TJX
 Allyse Dempsey, LPQ, Publix Super Markets
 Paulo Drebeque, LPQ, HomeGoods
 John Flynn, LPQ, Publix Super Markets
 Ronald Gillenberg, LPQ, CFI, NEXCOM
 Rikki Graham, LPQ, HomeGoods
 Gary Grudzielanek, LPQ, Genesco
 Keith Landschoot, LPQ, Genesco
 Dennis LeTendre, LPQ
 Jackson Luna, LPQ, American Eagle Outfitters
 Jeffrey Mauricio, LPQ
 Curtis Mitchell, LPQ, Michaels Stores
 Donnell Murphy, LPQ, Home Depot
 Michael Parson, LPQ, Walmart
 Kenneth Richardson, LPQ, Lowe's
 Charles Salazar, LPQ, IKEA North America Services
 Hunter Shaw, LPQ, Universal Orlando Resort
 Elijah Smalls, LPQ, Goodwill Industries of Seattle
 Holly Urfer, LPQ, Publix Super Markets
 Andrew Vantassel, LPQ ■

August 4 – 7, 2013
National Food Service Security Council 34th Annual Conference
 M Resort Spa and Casino,
 Las Vegas, NV
www.nfssc.com

September 10 – 11, 2013
Retail Council of Canada Loss Prevention Conference
 Toronto (ON) Congress Centre
www.retailcouncil.org

September 19, 2013
New England ORC Symposium & Trade Show 7th Annual Loss Prevention Conference
 DCU Center, Worcester, MA
www.retailersma.org

September 23 – 25, 2013
Consumer Returns
 Hilton Dallas (TX) Lincoln Centre
www.consumerreturnsusa.com

September 24 – 27, 2013
ASIS International 59th Annual Seminar and Exhibits
 McCormick Place, Chicago, IL
www.asisonline.org

October 15 – 17, 2013
Loss Prevention Research Council 9th Annual Impact Workshop
 University of Florida, Gainesville
www.lpresearch.org

November 4 – 7, 2013
Coalition of Law Enforcement and Retail (CLEAR) 4th Annual Training Conference
 The Weston Buckhead, Atlanta, GA
www.clearusa.org

November 20 – 21, 2013
ISC East 2013
 Javits Center North, New York City
www.isceast.com

January 12 – 15, 2014
National Retail Federation 103rd Annual Convention & Expo
 Jacob Javits Convention Center,
 New York City
www.bigshow14.com

March 9 – 12, 2014
Food Marketing Institute 2014 Asset Protection Conference
 Hyatt Regency Riverfront Hotel,
 Jacksonville, FL
www.fmi.org