

[WELCOME](#)[ARTICLES](#)[NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS](#)[CONTACT](#)

WELCOME

Happy 2006! I hope you have enjoyed this wonderful holiday season. If you haven't yet taken the time to reflect on accomplishments during the past year as well as to identify where you want your business to go in the new year, now is the perfect time to do just that.

Read on to learn more about creating a vision, including an exercise that is as fun as it is thought-provoking!

ARTICLES

CREATING A VISION FOR A SUCCESSFUL 2006

As each year comes to an end, do you make it a point to create a vision for what you want for your business in the upcoming year? Visioning is an important part of having a successful business. In fact, I believe it's crucial to have a vision for one's business BEFORE one sets goals and takes pen to paper to draft a plan to achieve those goals.

Many of my clients have an overall vision for their business at its pinnacle. They frequently check their current status with their dream to make sure they're on track. This is great, and to help ensure you are taking the steps necessary to make your dream come true, I suggest spending time creating a vision each year that helps lead you toward your ultimate dream.

One powerful exercise to help you consolidate your thoughts for the year ahead is something I call "The Future Letter." The instructions are simple. Pretend that it is December 31, 2006 and you are writing a letter to someone you care about who would want to celebrate your successes. Share what has transpired and what you have accomplished during the past year in your business.

Remember, the goal of this exercise is to identify your objectives for the year. This format helps you connect with what you really want, not what you think you should do. While you can certainly write whatever is compelling to you, important areas to address are:

1. What your business (or practice) looks like (number of clients, type of clients, revenue generated)
2. How you feel about your professional skills
3. Your business infrastructure
4. Marketing strategies
5. What your typical workday looks like
6. Anything that is important to you regarding your business

For maximum effectiveness, balance what you would love to have happen in your business with what you believe can happen. You want to balance what you currently believe is possible with what you could believe possible.

For example, let's say part of your long-term vision is to write a book on your specialty area and you haven't yet written a word and aren't even sure about the way to make it happen.

Better to write about what you believe you could accomplish (i.e., I've written the outline, have gone to a writer's conference, have a lead on a publisher, have written four amazing chapters and have sent 30 query letters) than something that is a huge stretch for your belief (i.e., I am a best selling author). Of course, if you want to have a best-selling book in contract within a year and believe you can do it, then don't hold back!

Once you write your future letter, you can create a plan that outlines the steps and strategies you will take during the year to make your vision a reality! Don't forget to check back against your future letter throughout the year to see how you're doing.

And, of course, remember that your future letter does not have to be perfect. In fact, there is no perfect! This is a "work in progress" and always will be. Give it a try and see how much more focused you are in the coming year. Also, if you would like to see a sample of a future letter, drop me an email and I'll be happy to send you one.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

If your company or organization could benefit from learning more about building a successful business, maximizing business development efforts or keeping key clients ecstatic, I'd be delighted to talk to you about a lunchtime presentation or workshop. Please give me a call at 858-566-5585 or email me at Barbara@Rainmaker-Strategies.com.

Don't forget to check out my business development tips booklet and comprehensive practice building system for lawyers. Read more by clicking on the products link at www.rainmaker-strategies.com.



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