

At this year's Open, I'll have five boyfriends.

----- Anna Kournikova

## Your path to prosperity

1. **Read business nonfiction regularly.** Make sure that you always in the middle of a pro-business biography. Use your local library, the internet, and other sources to locate works by and about people who loved business. Eventually you will come to find this enjoyable, and your soul will be infused with enthusiasm for the culture of business. Create your own small home library of this kind of material.
2. **Start drawing up an inventory of your skills.** No matter how irrelevant some skills might seem, write them down. Then alongside each skill or aptitude, write down the kinds of people who might benefit from those skills. Now brainstorm all the possible environments in which other people might encounter or seek those specific skills. Be open to the possibility that you are not currently deploying your most marketable skills to best or exclusive effect.
3. **Induct your employees into the culture of your organization.** Without this, your employees will never participate fully as members of a team, and they will fail to develop internal guidelines that will allow them to use their initiative in the absence of specific direction. Be crystal clear on exactly what you

expect from those who look to you for leadership. Ensure that no employee languishes in loneliness. Provide skill training that will allow each employee to contribute to the bottom line. Finally, make sure all your employees have the ability to remain afloat when things get turbulent.

4. **Do your best to avoid two or more simultaneous stress-inducing changes in your life.** If you are planning on major move, say, to another city, don't schedule your wedding for the same week. If you unexpectedly lose your job, postpone the surgery you had planned for the same period until you have had a chance to absorb and adjust to the career change.
5. **Before looking forward, look backward.** If things are stable and steady, they will continue to be stable and steady unless acted on by some force. How likely is it for some force to materialize? If things are changing rapidly, they are already being acted on by some force. Find it, recognize it, and determine how that force is likely to behave. Will it continue? Will it strengthen or weaken? Examine the trend of the matter concerning you. What has it been doing up to the present? Once you have discovered the trend, you must ask yourself whether it has been behaving in this way because nothing has made it behave differently, or is it behaving this way only because something is

preventing it from behaving differently.

6. **Visualize your future** Whether you are contemplating an investment or planning on opening a new business, faith is paramount. If you are unable to clearly visualize what it will all look like were it to go well, you would be better off deferring the action until you can see it. Your chances of success are vastly enhanced if you spend a few moments first actively visualizing the conversation with your prospect as culminating triumphantly.
7. **Prepare and maintain your own personal financial statements.** Your statements don't have to be of accounting firm quality. You need to know your money, and this is how to know it. You need to know your exact financial situation because that is what you are intending to improve. You can hardly measure improvement if you have no way of keeping score. Finally, examine your figures regularly or professionally for you.
8. **Watch for patterns.** There are always larger patterns and trends to watch and to try to understand. As business professionals, you should remain on high alert for these trends, and you should try to understand the underlying causes driving them, learn to foretell the future, and act now to take advantage of the future trend.