

The Path to Success

By
Mindi L. Schaefer, A.A.S., B.A., M.S.

The path to success begins with a goal in mind, the mindset of focus and persistence, a concrete plan of action, support structure, and ultimate faith in yourself.

The definition of success is different to everyone, whether you consider success to be earning more money, getting a corner office, or leaving your mark on society, the blueprint begins with a goal. A goal is something one works to achieve where you individually must understand what your intentions are and what you wish to attain. You must be realistic when goal setting so that you believe the achievement is worth the work, energy, and sacrifice necessary for success. You must know how far you are willing to strive to achieve success. Be realistic and true to yourself and your goals. By staying focused and persistent one can achieve anything in life especially their goals!

Your concrete plan must be realistic and you must always keep the plan in mind. Every element of the plan is important to overall success. You must understand the risks and rewards in the plan and fully know your strengths and weaknesses. Utilize your strengths to outweigh the risks and improve your weaknesses to ensure the gain of rewards. The best made plans must also have wiggle room so it can be maneuvered as life happens and compromise is needed.

Every successfully achieved goal must be supported by those around you. Our support structures are imperative to our success which can include your family, friends, and colleagues. Whether they support you with positive feedback or help guide you through your plan for success, supporters are a very important part of the path to success.

Your path to success must have foundation in the faith you have in yourself. To have faith in yourself means you are able to achieve anything. The power of believing in yourself is paramount to success and by having faith in yourself, you will try, try, and try again to succeed. Faith will give you the power to persevere over obstacles and focus on results!

My Personal Path

After winning PACO's Paralegal of the Year, I reflected on my path to success to analyze my original goal and plan of action. When I became a paralegal, I knew I wanted to pay it forward to fellow paralegals coming up through the ranks. Like many paralegals before me and many paralegals now in the industry, figuring out how to give back and having the time to give back can be challenging. I thought about my experiences coming out of paralegal school and the challenges I found in attempting to enter the field. I also considered my second passion – teaching. Combining those together, I felt the best possible way to give back would be through mentoring others.

Through the years, I had mentored fellow paralegals periodically, but I truly wanted to do something more and much more definitive and lasting. I knew to be a truly successful paralegal, I had to help others also succeed. Many paralegals over the years had helped me in many ways so paying it forward was something I too wanted to do. My plan of action centered around creating PACO's Mentoring Program. With the support of so many people, specifically those of PACO, the Mentoring Program has become such a huge success. As many plan of action's take on new life and direction, I hope the Mentoring Program too will grow larger over the years so that other paralegals will enjoy success in hopes of reaching their goals they have set within their careers as well.

Plan for Success

Goal

Action plan

Support from others

Faith in yourself

About the Author

Mindi Schaefer has thirteen years of litigation paralegal experience including extensive trial preparation experience. She received her Associate degree in legal assisting from Sinclair Community College, Bachelor degree in political science from Wright State University, and Master degree in communication and marketing from Franklin University. Mindi is also President-Elect, Public Relations Representative, and Mentoring Program Chair for the Paralegal Association of Central Ohio ("PACO"). She is currently the lead paralegal and marketing specialist at Poling Law in Columbus, Ohio. Mindi can be reached at (614) 737-2914 or mschaefer@poling-law.com.

