

STRATEGY AND THE FAT SMOKER

CHAPTER

For individuals and organizations to succeed... **CONTINUE**

BY DAVID MAISTER

FOR INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO SUCCEED—to get done what they know they should be doing—they need to possess three things: passion, a sincere interest in (and understanding of) people, and principles.

Drive and determination—passion—are the hallmarks of all successful individuals and businesses. Only where an (almost inexplicable) desire exists to achieve something new will people and institutions find the discipline to resist the short-term temptations to deviate from their chosen path. This passion may be innate in some individuals. Others will require skilled, effective managers to elicit and channel their energy and enthusiasm. Give people just a goal, and little will be accomplished. Leave it to them to find self-discipline, and most will fail to sustain high intensity. But place them in an environment where they are well coached, with colleagues equally turned on, and—contrary to what cynics might believe—the overwhelming majority of people of all backgrounds and educational levels will respond with enthusiasm and commitment.

For individuals and organizations to succeed—to get done what they know they should be doing—they need to possess three things: passion, a sincere interest in (and understanding of) people, and principles.

Many of us come to realize, later than we should, that no matter what you want in life, what you want to obtain—riches, fame, respect, the chance to work on exciting things, loyal and supportive employees, collaborating colleagues, even friendship and love—comes from *other people*. Success, no matter how you define it, is attainable only by persuading another person—a boss, a client, a colleague, a subordinate, a friend or loved one—to give you what you want. Understanding people

—one-by-one, not in the mass - and how they react to each one of us an individual, is not an optional skill. It is an essential skill. Most of us received training for—and development of—our logical, rational and analytical skills. But few of us have been substantially helped in the development of our interpersonal, psychological, emotional, political, social or sociological skills.

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The third ingredient that helps people and organizations execute their strategies and achieve their goals is a sincere belief in a set of principles. People who are acting on principle are much more likely to get done what they say they will do than will those who are doing those things solely in pursuit of future rewards. Men and women who act on principle and, more importantly, are believed to be acting on deeply held principle, attract customers, subordinates and colleagues. Whether people know your principles and trust you is a major determinant of how they are going to respond to you.

Do you really need all three of the elements: passion, people skills and principles? I'm convinced that in life, careers and business you do require all three.

If you have both passion and an understanding of how people work, but no fixed principles, then I think you are dangerous. You'll seduce a lot of people to your side, but you'll end up fooling them or betraying them. You'll be an exploiter.

If you have passion and principles, but no understanding of how people work, you'll also draw a lot of people to your side, but it will all come to naught. Without an understanding of people, you'll neither build an organization nor earn clients' and customers' trust. You'll be a firebrand.

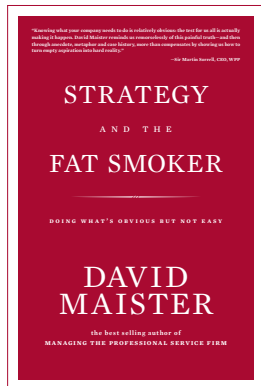
Men and women who act on principle and, more importantly, are believed to be acting on deeply held principle, attract customers, subordinates and colleagues.

If you have principles and an understanding of people, but no passion, you'll be righteous but ineffective.

Is any one of these elements more important than another? No. As my wife, Kathy, points out, the most important ingredient in any recipe is the one you forgot to put in!

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INFO



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Maister is widely acknowledged as one of the world's leading authorities on the management of professional service firms. For two decades he has acted as a consultant to prominent professional firms around the world, on a wide variety of strategic and managerial issues. In 2002, he was named as one of the top 40 business thinkers in the world (Business Minds, by Tom Brown, PrenticeHall/Financial Times). He is the author of the bestselling books *Managing the Professional Service Firm* (1993), *True Professionalism* (1997), *The Trusted Advisor* (2000), *Practice What You Preach* (2001) and *First Among Equals* (2002). These books have been translated into 14 languages. For seven years, he served as a professor on the faculty of the Harvard Business School (1979-85), prior to launching his consulting practice. He lives in Boston, Massachusetts.

In March of 2005, he finally took his own advice, gave up smoking and lost 30 pounds.

Visit his website at www.davidmaister.com.

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