

How to Guarantee Career Success

By Ed Marx
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Now that I have your attention, there are no guarantees when it comes to career. That said, I am sharing with you a technique that helped 18 of my former direct reports fulfill their career dreams to become chief information officers (CIO). Seventeen of these in healthcare, one for the city zoo, which we both reasoned required the same skill set. I even have one "grandbaby" that I know of, a CIO spawned from one of my former directs turned CIO. We met one time at a conference and it was as if we were family!

Listen I know there is no get rich quick gimmicks and what follows may not work for you. Yet I challenge you to try this simple and effective method to help you achieve your career goals, whatever they might be. When I was a CIO I had one direct tell me she wanted to be the best damn data analyst ever. By golly, her customers thought she was. It matters not your aspiration, just that you have one. With a plan to achieve it.

I give all credit for what follows to the COO of Parkview Episcopal Medical Center who mentored me back in the 1990s. While I was already into life planning, he convinced me to take this same approach to career planning. I did. I achieved my then vision of becoming a CIO in my early thirties, taking that roll at an academic medical center with multibillion dollar revenue. Along the way I passed leaders smarter than me, more credentialed than me and more experienced. A big differentiator? I had a plan and knew where I was going. They just bounced along.



Here is the thesis. If strategic planning enables the success of organizations, why haven't we adopted these same principles and process in our own career?

Now hear me, these are even more important to apply to our roles as husbands, wives, partners, moms and dads, etc. But my editorial crew made me stick to career planning. If you want more specifics on how to do this for life, let them hear about it in the comment section. Perhaps I can address this the next time.

Finally, while I serve primarily in the technical and digital realm, it is all about leadership. Therefore, having a codified strategic plan is relevant for everyone, regardless of age, vocation or current role. The methodology and theory is equally applicable to every one of us.

Let's get this party started.

1

Iteration

This is an iterative process. If you stick to this, you will have a working career strategic plan in 30 days.

2

Format

Simplicity is key. I believe in a one-page format.

3

Measure what matters

You can use key performance indicators (KPI) or objectives, key results (OKR), etc. It does not matter as long as you can objectively measure.

4

Best practice

I mimic the standard strategic planning formula to include Vision, Mission, Values followed by KPI or OKR. Again, adjust to your style.

5

Review, review, review

We all know planning is more about the process and less about the plan. You should have quarterly reviews to make adjustments and annual reviews...as in annual retreats, to score yourself and adjust plans for the following year or milestone.

6

Share

Take your draft and share with friends and family and mentors and managers. Take the feedback and iterate.

7

Reminders

I kept my plan framed and on my office desk or credenza. Every day I was reminded of my vision and mission.

Interestingly, I have taught this methodology in numerous webinars and conferences around the world. I always tell people that if they put in the effort to create a draft, I will spend one hour with them in review and then again a year later after their first year. Less than 1% take me up on this offer. They also happen to be those 18 direct reports with a few others sprinkled in. Simply put, it works.

What follows is my 2021 version of my career strategic plan. The Vision, Mission and Values have remained stable for some time. My OKR change annually. It is imperfect but is an incredibly critical tool that helps me remain focused and emboldened to go after those things that I feel called to accomplish.

Now you can keep an eye on me to see how I do.

ED MARX

CAREER STRATEGIC PLAN

VALUES

- * Balance
- * Transparency
- * Innovation
- * Integrity
- * Accountability
- * People

01

MISSION

Leverage Leadership and Digital to Improve Health of People Worldwide

02

VISION

Develop Business & Clinical Digital Leaders who Transform Organizations and Change the World

03

OBJECTIVES

Seek opportunities to serve with world-class leaders

Key Results

- Serve where I must stretch self to make an impact
- Observe and reflect on leadership 2 hours weekly
- Update wardrobe annually

Gain a wide variety of experiences and exposure

Key Results

- Serve in for-profit, not-for-profit, public health, faith-based and academic settings
- Experience provider, payor and life science verticals
- Balance digital understanding with business and clinical realities
- Serve on two boards annually

Continuously develop skill mix for myself and those around me

Key Results

- Raise up leaders; 2 Directors and 1 CIO annually
- Podcasts (5) weekly in and outside of healthcare and digital
- Read WSJ and NYT daily
- Actively participate in CHIME, HIMSS and partner councils (2 annual)
- Make and sustain key mentoring relationships (annual/formal)
- Engage non-healthcare CIO's monthly

Make my organization and leadership famous

Key Results

- Exceed performance standards annually
- Earn national recognition for organization annually
- Present monthly in and outside of healthcare
- Develop new content via podcasts, webinars and blogs weekly

Look for innovation to further patient care and business excellence

Key Results

- Spend 10 hours weekly preparing self and organization for the future
- Spend half my time out of the office and with business leadership
- Spend one day per week out of the office with clinicians



AUTHOR



Edward W. Marx serves as the Chief Digital Officer for Tech Mahindra Health and Life Sciences. As CDO, he oversees digital strategy and execution for providers, payors, pharma and bio-tech. Edward is active on Boards, writing books and speaks globally as a Partner in Marx & Marx LLC.

Edward was Chief Information Officer at Cleveland Clinic, an \$11B health system with facilities in Florida, Nevada, Toronto, Abu Dhabi and London. His responsibilities included digital solutions and information technology. Prior to joining Cleveland Clinic, Edward served as CIO for The Advisory Board/NYC Health & Hospitals, Texas Health Resources and University Hospitals. Concurrent with his healthcare career, he served 15 years in the Army Reserve as a combat medic and combat engineer officer.

Edward is a Fellow of the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives and Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society. He has won numerous awards, including HIMSS/CHIME 2013 CIO of the Year, and has been recognized by CIO and Computer World as one of the "Top 100 Leaders." Becker's named Marx as the 2015 "Top Healthcare IT Executive" and the 2016 "17 Most Influential People in Healthcare."

Edward is the author of 5 books including the 2019 healthcare bestseller *Voices of Innovation*. His new book *Healthcare Digital Transformation; How Consumerism, Technology and Pandemic are Accelerating the Future* is already the 2020 bestseller. He is contracted two additional leadership books in 2021.

Edward received his Bachelor of Science in psychology and a Master of Science in design, merchandising, and consumer sciences from Colorado State University.

Edward is married to Simran and they have five children and four grandchildren. Both wellness fanatics, they love to work out together and hike throughout the world. They co-wrote a book on passion in marriage to be released this Fall. Edward is a 7-year member of TeamUSA Triathlon and represents his country at championship events around the world.