

# LEADERSHIP TR@CKS

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## The Formula for Success

By Dr. Jim Dyke

Years ago, a mentor of mine named Derric Johnson shared an important piece of advice with me that helped me understand some basic realities of professional success and helped guide me through some very strategic decisions about my work and my career.

### Success is a Formula

He told me that professional success is a combination of three important ingredients: competence, motivation, and opportunity. He also showed me all three ingredients are necessary for success in a career or vocation. But before I go any further, let me first clarify what I mean by “success.”

### Success is...???

I’m referring to success as: *your highest level of achievement or impact in your chosen profession.* Your ability to achieve and have impact at the highest level of your potential is a function of three important elements: your **competence**, your level of **personal motivation** or commitment, and the **opportunities** that you have through which to express those abilities and commitment.

### It Takes All Three

It’s like the “fire triangle” that you learned about in school. Remember that? Fire needs all three ingredients to exist: fuel, heat, and air. Take any one of the three away, and the fire goes out. Success is like that, too. Remove any of the three ingredients and the flame of impact and achievement dies out. Take competence, for example.



### You Gotta Have the Juice

Competence is vital to success! You cannot succeed in your profession unless you have sufficient ability, skill, and knowledge. This is pretty basic, but I’m amazed at how many times I see someone fail in their work because they are “over their head”—they have risen to a certain place or position in their profession and found themselves overwhelmed by the demands of their circumstances. This happens so often in organizations that Laurence Peter codified it in his famous “Peter Principle”: *In a hierarchy every employee tends to rise to his level of incompetence.*

### You Gotta Want It

But competence is simply not enough. Motivation is essential to the formula as well—you cannot succeed unless you are willing to actually use your skill and commit yourself to the hard work necessary to succeed. We all know individuals with promise who never realized their potential because they simply were unwilling to apply themselves with diligence and determination. Still... competence and motivation are incomplete without the third ingredient.

### And You Gotta Have the Chance

Derric Johnson also taught me that all opportunities are NOT created equal!

Some opportunities are better than others. “Better” opportunities give able and dedicated people the chance to shine—to perform and to achieve at the level of their very best, and to do so with the greatest effect and impact. Part of the challenge of leadership is to exercise discernment when choosing places and times to serve—to understand the nature of each opportunity and how it will enlarge or limit one’s potential for success.

### So...What’cha Got??

What does your success triangle look like? Do you have all the ingredients? Are you building on your talents and strengths and sharpening your skills? Are you committed to the hard work necessary to achieve your dreams? Are you in a place and position where you can perform and gain the visibility and recognition you need to attract new and better opportunities?

### Don’t Stop Now

Get the matching issue of *The Personal Trainer* and find out how the *Success Formula* can help you achieve your potential, delegate more effectively, and retain your talented staff. Yes, all these things are connected to the *Success Formula*. Use this link and start applying the principles of success to your life and work:

<http://thebossdoctor.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/PTRAIN13.pdf>

**Leadership Tracks** is a resource for growing leaders edited by Dr. Jim Dyke, the Founder and Director of **Corporate Leadership Initiatives, Inc.**—an organization dedicated to equipping men and women with skills and principles pertinent to the role and life of a transformational leader of the 21st century. His personal blog is **www.TheBossDoctor.net**. For more information, you can log on to the website at: **www.CLIonline.com** and connect with additional practical and creative resources, that will help you and your team apply the ideas and principles presented in this newsletter. Copyright 2020—James R. Dyke—all rights reserved.