

Plan To Succeed



For business and personal success, a business plan and a written set of life goals are essential. These are both congruent and separate. Congruent because they run parallel as parts of our lives, and separate because we need to keep a separation between the two to maintain work/life balance.

People who have made a written personal plan have proven to have realized their dreams within their projected timelines. Others, who have not established where they're going and how to get there, haven't given themselves a chance.

Only you can limit your own achievements and choices in life. If you choose to succeed, no one else can limit or stop you—without your permission. Remember, YOU are in charge.

7 SIMPLE RULES FOR A LIFE PLAN

- 1** Make sure the goal you're working for is something you really want, not just something that sounds good.
- 2** A goal cannot contradict any of your other goals. For example, if one of your values is honesty, you can't set a goal that requires dishonesty to reach it.



- 3** Balance your life by developing goals in these six areas: Home life, Financial, Ethical/Spiritual, Physical, Social, and Educational.
- 4** State your goals in the positive. "I will get Client A on a contract" is positive. "Hopefully, if I can, I might get Client A to sign a contract" is setting yourself up for a failure.
- 5** By all means, make your goals high enough. Push the boundaries of your imagination—the sky is the limit.
- 6** Write down your goals. This is the most important aspect. When writing down your goals, you are imprinting the visual into your subconscious and it will stay with you.
- 7** Write out your goals in detail. Can you visualize your goal? Take time every day to see it, hear it, smell it, feel it.

Whatever your goals in life or business are, AVITAN's customized training and management programs can help you achieve your objectives. Call us to find out more!

★★★★★ 5 STAR Leadership Series



We are kicking off the 2012 workshop season with a session that will explore **effective management techniques** for your employees, clients—and yourself. Learn how to train and develop a **workforce that helps your organization grow**. Perfect for owners, bosses, supervisors and foremen.

Free to current and past AVITAN clients. The cost for non-clients is \$1250.00 per person. For details and to register, please visit us at www.AVITAN.ws.



Edmonton

Jan 26, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Radisson Hotel South
4440 Gateway Blvd

Greater Vancouver

Feb 2, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Sandman Signature Hotel
10251 St Edwards Dr, Richmond

Save the Date!

AVITAN
8th annual
CONVENTION

A conference for owners
& spouses at beautiful
Crescent Beach, BC

Friday, **June 8**
2012



How Good Is Your Ability to Listen?

Effective listening is one the most important attributes of every good leader. And yet, it is so often compromised because we are too busy talking or simply refusing to see the other person's perspective. Take our self-assessment quiz and find out how you rate:



Score yourself on each statement as 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (mildly disagree), 3 (partly agree and partly disagree), 4 (mildly agree), or 5 (strongly agree).

- ___ I prefer talking to listening to what others say.
- ___ It mostly doesn't occur to me to ask questions.
- ___ When others are talking I'm often thinking about what I'll say next.
- ___ The main point of talking is to impress people, or at least to entertain them.
- ___ My perspective is usually right, so if others disagree, I convince them to see it my way.
- ___ It bothers me when people get their facts wrong.
- ___ It's important to point out when people are wrong about something.
- ___ Most people are boring, so I usually need to do most of the talking if the conversation is going to be interesting.
- ___ TOTAL SCORE (The higher the score, the worse your listening skills.)

Poor listening can cost you and your business more than you realize. Let's say not listening to your employees results in one mistake per day per employee at a cost of \$10. If

you have 20 employees, that's \$200 per day, or \$1,000 per week. That adds up to a cost of \$52,000 per year! This is just an example but it nicely illustrates what happens when business owners give listening the lowest priority.

If you never listen to your employees, they will feel that their opinion doesn't matter. They'll have scant motivation to contribute to your company's bottom line, and, sooner or later, they'll leave for a better job.

Making a conscious effort to actually hear what others say allows you to gain important information, prevent misunderstandings and avert costly errors. Most importantly, effective listening builds trust and empowers your employees.

"We have been given two ears but one single mouth, in order that we may listen more and talk less."

~Epictetus, Greek Philosopher

The Sky Is the Limit for BC Renovators in 2012



Renovation companies in Western Canada can expect to create more jobs in a 2012 business economy dominated by steady work.

Skilled tradesmen, known for migrating with their trucks and tools to greener work pastures in Alberta and Saskatchewan, could well reverse their steps to BC.

Peter Simpson, the president and CEO of the Greater Vancouver Home Builders Assn., recently told AVITAN that while 2012 promises no great improvement for construction starts, it won't



Peter Simpson

offer any sizeable spikes or drops either. On the heels of a remarkable recovery from the 2009 recession, the year 2012 promises a steady work outlook for British Columbia's homebuilders and a rosy experience for its renovators.

BC Homeowners are expected to spend \$7.6 billion on renovation in 2012, with \$3.7 billion in the Lower Mainland and the other half in Victoria and the Interior. "The sky is the limit with renovations. I've already seen \$6 million spent on one project and, in particular, a handmade nickel bathtub retailing for \$60,000—without the plumbing," said Simpson.

Simpson predicted that the renovation spending will create many jobs. He said many tradesmen had left BC for greener pastures in Saskatchewan, but as the new year approaches, many Alberta license plates are being seen at BC work sites.

Simpson also cited a continuing challenge to replace retiring Baby Boomer employees with competent graduates of apprenticeships. "We have to convince our young people there's a future for them in getting established in well paying jobs."

MARKETING TRUTHS

People don't buy what they need. They buy what they want.

What people want is the extra emotional bonus they get when they buy something they love.

Good marketing is marketing that people choose to notice.

Reminding the customer of a story they know and trust is a powerful shortcut.

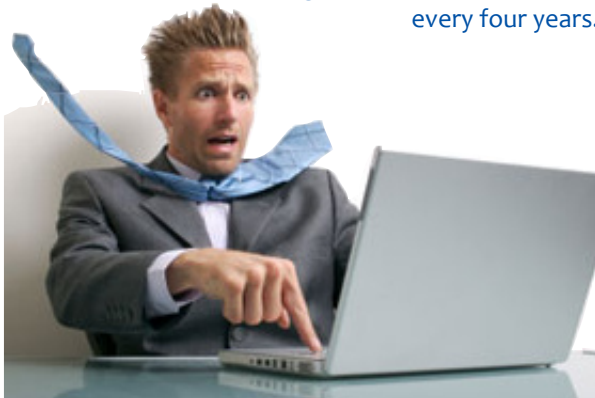
The relationship with your customer doesn't end with the payment.

Is Your Website Turning Away Customers?



Your company's website is often the first place customers look for information. The impression your website makes determines whether or not they contact you. You are losing business if your website is guilty of one or more of the following:

IT LOOKS DATED. Let's say a customer plans a complete remodel and is looking for a renovation company that will give their home that beautiful updated look. If your website looks old and tired, and your project gallery is less than impressive or non-existent, the customer will have little trust in the quality of your services. Any business website should get a face-lift at least once every four years.



IT IS DIFFICULT TO NAVIGATE. Research shows the first 10 seconds of a website visit are critical for people's decision to stay or leave. That means you have a very short window to clearly communicate who you are and what you do. Make it easy for visitors to quickly find out if your services match their needs and how they can contact you.

IT DOESN'T SHOW UP IN INTERNET SEARCH. How your website is programmed directly affects how well it shows up in search engines such as Google. If it's structured improperly, people may not be able to find you! We can help with search engine optimization.

YOU DON'T HAVE A WEBSITE. In today's marketplace, if you don't have a website, you don't exist. It is essential that you have one if you want to create the impression of a professional and established company.

Whether you need a brand new website or a refresh, the creative team at AVITAN can design an attractive and easy-to-navigate website that will make your company stand out. Give us a call!

Meet the AVITAN Team

Ron Hofman

is the Project Manager at AVITAN. His responsibilities include financial and business analysis, overseeing trainers, training and perhaps most important, being the client liaison.

Ron is charged with being your advocate in the AVITAN office and is always striving to help our clients do better and be better.

Ron grew up in the Vancouver area, getting his undergraduate degree in Economics from Simon Fraser University. After moving to the USA to attend Arizona State University, Ron graduated with a Juris Doctorate and, to his surprise, a wife. In early 2011, Ron returned to Canada with his wife and two young boys, joining AVITAN a few months later.



How Your Mistakes Can Make You Smarter



It is all in how you react. Two new studies examined what happens in people's brains when making a mistake. The first study involved students performing a computer task, the other used doctors deciding which medication to prescribe. Both groups received immediate feedback about their correct or incorrect choices. Next, they were given a chance to try again and see if they'd learned from their mistakes.

The studies resulted in two typical brain responses. The first is denial. When the feedback we get is not consistent with our self-image, we tend to ignore it. When we do that, we fail to learn from past mistakes and our performance doesn't improve.

The second type of response treats the mistake as a problem that needs solving. Our brains increase attention when making the next decision, striving to avoid the same mistake. With a positive attitude, we are much more likely to improve our performance.

The studies also discovered a very interesting pattern. The most experienced participants (the doctors) were the least likely to pay attention and learn from their mistakes. In real life, making the same mistake over and over could have disastrous consequences for their patients. The lesson we learn is that relying only on our experience is sometimes not enough. When getting a critical feedback, we should pay attention to it—it often leads to great successes.





Spotlight on Clients



We'd like to give our welcome to **Effect Home Builders, Blacktop Paving** (both from Edmonton, AB), and **Stoneshire Homes** of St. Albert, AB—the most recent clients to sign on with AVITAN, ready to take their business to the next level. We look forward to an exciting and productive year with all of you!

Congratulations to Alex and Leslie Heidelberg of **Heidelberg Landscaping** in Abbotsford, BC, on their early Christmas present—a beautiful baby girl, Skyler, born on December 10. A future business woman?

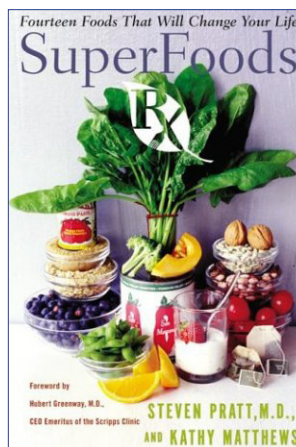
It looks like it's going to be a great new year for **Wilkie Project Management** in Surrey, BC. Shortly after incorporating the company, Wilkie PM was awarded a new contract for an 8-month, 96-unit town home project. What a great news for owners Adam and Samatha Wilkie!

Just before Christmas, **Rencon Industries** in Leduc, AB, launched their new website, designed by AVITAN. You can visit it at www.renconindustries.ca.



Happy New Year to all our past, current, and future clients! We wish you and your families an abundance of happiness, laughter, exciting new memories, good health, and business prosperity all year long.
~The Avitan Team

A Key To Super Health



Did you know that adding more turkey in your diet boosts your immunity? Or that oranges extend your lifespan? And how about a cup of Earl Grey protecting your teeth?

If healthier diet is one of your New Year's resolutions then **SuperFoods Rx** is just the book for you. Backed by years of research, the impressive list of health benefits is outlined in individual chapters on each one of the fourteen superfoods. The book also offers tips and recipes on how to get more superfoods into your everyday meals.

ISBN: 978-0061172281, \$8.99, amazon.ca

Your input is always welcome!

Got good news? Heard a great joke? Know of a topic you'd like to see in our newsletter? Please share with us!

Contact: Hana Bilikova hana@avitan.ws

Common Sense

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape.

He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as: Knowing when to come in out of the rain; Why the early bird gets the worm; Life isn't always fair; and Maybe it was my fault.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies, such as Don't spend more than you can earn and Adults, not children, are in charge. His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children.



Common Sense lost the will to live as the churches became businesses, and criminals received better treatment than their victims. Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault.

Common Sense finally gave up the will to live after a woman failed to realize a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap, and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death, by his parents, Truth and Trust, by his wife Discretion, his daughter Responsibility, and his son, Reason. He is survived by his 4 stepbrothers; I Know My Rights, I Want It Now, Someone Else Is To Blame, and I'm A Victim. Not many attended his funeral because so few realized he was gone.

If you still remember him, pass this on. If not, do nothing.