

# 8 Fundamentals for Better Business Success

*Moving your business forward starts with the fundamentals.*

by Kindra Gordon, field editor

What's the secret to success? Whether it's a sports game or the very real game of life, most experts agree, success comes from doing the fundamentals well.

Jim Rohn, an author and personal development speaker often quoted for his inspirational messages, was known

for saying, "Success is neither magical nor mysterious. Success is the natural consequence of consistently applying the basic fundamentals."

Likewise, basketball great Michael Jordan has said, "When I was young, I had to learn the fundamentals of basketball. You can have all the physical ability in the world, but you still have to know the fundamentals."

With regard to beef production, the same is true. Success hinges on applying the fundamentals of nutrition, vaccination, sire selection, breeding soundness exams and management protocols. Those are skills producers focus on and grow by attending conferences and seminars to gain proficiency, and consulting with veterinarians and nutritionists for advice.

But what about the fundamentals to improve human resource and

business management skills? For agricultural producers, these can often be an overlooked management area. How can you become a more efficient manager and better leader? Here are a dozen nuggets of advice from several business experts.

"Success is neither magical nor mysterious. Success is the natural consequence of consistently applying the basic fundamentals." — Jim Rohn

**1. Crowd your calendar.** Most leadership and management gurus advise tossing the 'to-do' list and replacing it with a calendar. The reason being, great leaders actually schedule everything. Instead of placing tasks on a to-do list, they pick a date, time and duration and schedule it on their calendar. This is the only guaranteed way to know you are investing your minutes in alignment with your values and goals.

**2. Team first.** Recognize you can't accomplish much (if anything) without a team, so the most important thing to foster in yourself and those you work with is a team-first attitude.

How can you build that team camaraderie? It actually begins with saying "thank you." Yes, appreciation is the top thing employees seek — even more than compensation,

according to employee management specialists. When appreciation is expressed for employees' efforts, employees feel valued and often work even harder to contribute to the business.

To offer sincere appreciation, specialists suggest making it specific. This means when thanking the individual (or group), name them, state what they did and what the effect was as a result of their actions. It's also best to offer this recognition as close to when the activity occurred as possible, so employees recognize it did not go unnoticed.

**3. Monitor weekly.** Business advisor Colin Dunn suggests holding weekly meetings for teams to effectively communicate and evaluate progress on achieving a business or organization's vision. He suggests employees should report on individual commitments, account for results and make new commitments. Dunn adds, "You are not telling them what to do. They are setting their own steps to achieve the goal and vision that have been established."

Another tip: start each meeting by having employees share one good news item on a recent achievement. Business consultants say using this tactic often sets a positive tone for the entire meeting.

**4. Be likable, not liked.** If you are a parent, you've likely already figured this one out. Wanting to be liked is normal (by your kids and your employees), but it makes it difficult to make tough choices and give candid feedback. Leadership is not about you. It's about what is best for those you lead. Managers must be tough and tender. Try to be likable, without caring whether you are liked. Let your team know that your decisions are about results.

**5. Set parameters and stick to them.** As you implement these management fundamentals, one essential ingredient is to set some goal posts, or "if, then" scenarios to guide your decision-making.

An entrepreneur presenting in Iowa offered this sage advice as he explained how he would decide if he should continue with his start-up or if it was time to pull the plug. This individual said having a timeline in place helped keep him focused on the business, as opposed to reacting to emotions. Thus, at certain points in time, he'd analyze if his company was meeting the production and financial metrics he'd projected. This allowed him to step outside of his emotional attachment and look at things in black and white to make a decision.

Examples for a ranch operation might include drought planning — "if we do not receive X amount of rain by X date, then we will..." or market planning, "if prices are at X level by X date, then..." Utilize your team to help discuss and establish these parameters, so they are aware of the plan in place.

- 
1. Crowd your calendar
  2. Team first
  3. Monitor weekly
  4. Be likable, not liked
  5. Set parameters and stick to them
  6. Embrace conflict
  7. Be willing to veer off the traditional path
  8. Be willing to quit

**6. Embrace conflict.** No one likes conflict, but avoiding it never solves the problem. Instead, the conflict will likely continue to bubble up and tear apart family and work relationships — and ultimately the business. By working through conflict, you can achieve clarity on expectations and timelines, complete the work that needs done, and most importantly, plan effectively for the future. You might even start to have fun within your workplace.

To effectively address conflict, business managers suggest holding regularly scheduled meetings where family or coworkers can communicate — without judgment or attacks — to begin to build trust and respect. Once that environment has been established, begin to tackle one "pain point" a month and discuss solutions, again without passing

judgments. This may require having all involved share suggested solutions, then taking some time to consider those suggestions, and a few days or a week later reconvening to discuss a resolution.

Everyone involved should be respectful and prepared to compromise. Recognize no group is ever going to be in 100% agreement on every issue. And remind yourself and your team, conflict can push us to become better — better in our communication and relationships, and better in the solutions and resiliency that it prompts.

**7. Be willing to veer off the traditional path.** Michelle Poler spoke at the National FFA Convention and shared how she was on a path to graduate from high school, then college, land a job, get married, buy a house, start and raise a family, then retire and die.

After getting married, Poler points out she really only had four more things to do on the list. Rather than stay on the comfortable path, she decided instead to pursue a dream — which was moving to New York City for a master's program. From there, she made a list of 100 fears she wanted to face (in 100 days). As a result, she re-energized her life.

Perhaps we all need to spend a little time thinking about — and dusting off — our dreams, and then take steps to pursue them. New ideas and new innovations come from seeking new opportunities — and many organizations are in need of a new generation of members and volunteers. Challenge yourself to

commit to one or two new goals, or join one or two new organizations in your community or your industry. See what benefits can be gleaned from these unexpected experiences. No matter where you are in your career, consider setting a bold goal and pursuing it. Sam Walton opened his first Wal-Mart when he was 44. Julia Child published her first cookbook when she was 39. Gutzon Borglum began carving Mount Rushmore in his 60s.

**8. Be willing to quit.** It may seem contradictory to suggest seeking new goals and be willing to quit within the same article. But, consider sometimes we need people to step aside in order to create new spaces. If you are part of something that's no longer your passion (or wasn't in the first place), it may be best for all involved that you seek out opportunities that are a better fit. Author and philanthropist Bob Goff suggests having a "quit it"

day. He quits something (from TV to unhealthy habits to frustrating projects) every Thursday — and reports it's one of the most freeing experiences ever. While that's pretty extreme, perhaps you take time to find a few things to prune out of your schedule and instead refocus purposefully on the people and organizations that are most important to you. 



**Historic Herds**

# ROCKING P FARM

*Angus since 1953*



The Rocking P herd would have started when Don purchased two registered Black Angus heifers in an association sale for FFA projects his sophomore year of high school. Following two years at WVU, Don returned home to the farm. He met Mida through 4-H, and after she graduated from Glenville State College, they were married in 1958. Adding animals from Corbin Branch Farm of Bridgeport and consignment sales, the herd grew up to 100 head at one time. The rocker on the "P" in the farm name was formed from the curve in the road that used to connect the farmland before the highway was put in.

New bulls were purchased to keep the new bloodlines coming in for their buyers; the two that helped them the most were Miners Fortune 2000, leased to ABS and BCC Bushwacker 41-93, leased to Genex.

Rocking P held field days with judging contests for several years, with the first state showmanship contest at their farm in 1967. Both Don & Mida were involved in Angus activities. Don served as state Secretary from 1973 to 1993, while Mida served as an advisor for the Junior Association. She was named Junior Angus advisor of the year during the 1981 National Show in Iowa.

Don & Mida Peterson want to say THANK YOU to all of their family, friends and guest consignors who have been with them during this 50-year Production Sale journey. The Rocking P Farm 50th Production Sale was held November 2019. Rocking P has cut back on the herd but will still sell in their association sales and southern bull and heifer test sales.

Herd Sires:

Shawnee Winds Exceed 5S59 by SydGen Exceed 3223  
 SydGen Cool 5144 by Connealy Cool 39L  
 RP Ten Speed 86 by SAV Ten Speed 3022



**ROCKING P FARM**  
**Don & Mida Peterson**  
**6581 US Hwy 33E • Horner, WV 26372**  
**304-269-3877**  
**rockingp@shentel.net**  
**Granddaughter, Kylea Arnold**