

The 7 Arenas of Success by Chris Widener

Turn potential into performance by winning at each phase of success.

“The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly.” —Theodore Roosevelt

The degree of our success is directly related to the degree in which we excel in and balance certain segments, or principles, of our life. Every person, organization and business can, and should, operate out of the following seven arenas. Here's how:

1. I Am: Arena of Values

Every person, organization and business has values, and they may not know or be able to articulate what they are, but they have them. The values of a business are what they believe in: What do they think is important?

What a company values will affect the way the business runs and the employees act and work, so it is important to know what those values are. Here are some questions for you to ask: What do we think is important? What do we hope to accomplish? What do we believe in as we go about our work?

Is there clear indication in your workplace or home that you are operating in the Arena of Values? Can you say without a doubt that “I Am,” or “We Are”?

2. I Should: Arena of Responsibility

What are the responsibilities that we must live by?

- To be a person and company of high integrity. Ultimately we are only a success to the degree that we are honorable people. This means that we are honest, hardworking and forthright. I don't think it matters how much money one accumulates if they are not a person of integrity.
- To make our families priority. Sometimes I think of all the people I help and work so hard for day by day and realize that none of them will be at my side when I breathe my last breath. My wife and children will fill those spots—so they get the most from me.
- To give to charity. One of the things that rounds us out as healthy, successful people is to give away money, time and possessions, free of all strings. Instead of a \$10 check every now and then, put it into your budget to give away a certain amount every month—make it big, make it a sacrifice. At first you will think it is impossible, but it will come around. At the end of your life, you will be able to look back and see the difference you have made.

3. I Could: Arena of Possibility

People often get so caught up in the day to day that they lose their zest for life. They get the nose to the grindstone, and may be doing important work, but they forget to dream. They forget to think of what could be.

How is your business in the arena of possibility? What would happen if at your next staff meeting, whether you have 30 people or just you and your partner, you asked the question, “What are the possibilities for this business to really do something great?” I think that you would probably be astounded at what you might hear.

People have great ideas, dreams and possibilities inside of them—they just need someone to stop the treadmill and ask the question, surrounded by an atmosphere of acceptance.

4. I Would: Arena of Negotiation

Every possibility has a cost associated with it. At this point, an organization not only says “we could” but also internally negotiates with questions about the tradeoffs, like:

If this is to come about, what will the cost be? Is it worth it?

If this comes about, what will the ramifications be in other areas of my business? What other adjustments would have to be made, and are they worth it?

What would the reward have to be in order for me to pursue this possibility?

How long will it take me to reach this possibility? In light of that, do I want to readjust the organization for that period of time?

Take some time to measure the costs of your possibilities. Then, when you find the ones that are good for you, go for it.

5. I Want To: Arena of Vision

Now, of those possibilities, what ones would you really like to do? The ideas that stir our passions for excellence become things that we can easily “see.” They can become our “vision.”

In order for something to happen, someone has to first see it happening long before it actually does. If money, and time, were no object, if you knew that you couldn’t fail at your attempt, what would you want to try? Then, why not try? This is your vision. And a vision is a powerful thing—it’s what drives success and accomplishment.

Great things come when we dream, and vision drives us to attempt things far beyond where we are right now.

“Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, though checkered by failure, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy, nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat.”

6. I Will: Arena of Dedication

Perseverance is the most important thing in work. I have come to believe that much of what separates the successful from the unsuccessful is simply determination. The successful are not always the brightest, the best looking or those with the most prestigious diplomas. Instead, they are the ones who say, "I will do this!" and "Hardship will not deter me!" These people have entered into and continually live in the arena of dedication. Staying there long enough usually puts them on top.

Dedication is a key to success. So the next step? Hard work! Recognize all of the hard work that will be involved in achieving your dreams, then spend some time preparing to meet the challenges. Here are some questions to help you get through the process, prepare yourself for the job ahead and come out on the end of success.

- What are the obstacles we will face?
- How will we overcome those obstacles?
- What kinds of attitudes and dedication will we need to exhibit when the time comes to face difficulties and uphill battles?
- What are the rewards our dedication will bring to us as individuals and corporately?

Focusing in on these questions will help you prepare for the times when you will need to show dedication, perseverance and inner fortitude. The mental preparation now will strengthen you to succeed later.

7. I Do: Arena of Accomplishment

Accomplishment comes when the job is complete. What is important at this stage? A few things:

- A little rest. It isn't time to sit back for good, but resting can be a much-needed reward for all of the hard work you have shown up until now. After the pace of pursuing your dreams, your body and mind need some well-deserved rest.
- A little celebration. Celebrations are great for us. What is all the work for if one can't enjoy the fruit of his labor? Maybe it is a small dinner out. Maybe it is a huge celebration for 100 of your closest friends and business associates. Maybe it is an exotic vacation.
- A sense of fulfillment. The greatest reward is, as the old saying goes, "the satisfaction of a job well done." Not many people make it to the accomplishment arena very often. Enjoy the satisfaction!
- A new high bar. One of the great things about life is the challenge of new heights. You have accomplished your task, and that's good, but... what's next?