

"It's NOT about E-Commerce (The Electronics); It's about R-Commerce (The Relationships) (SM)

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# Rules & Tools for Success Today

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By Terry L. Brock

From time-to-time, it's important time to step back and re-evaluate life both from a business perspective and a personal perspective. In fact, in today's hectic, gotta-have-it-yesterday world, we absolutely need a time to step off the planet, think about the "why" of living and evaluate what we're doing. Quiet meditation is not a luxury but a necessity in a frenetic-paced world.

In the midst of all that "busy-ness" here are some rules that work in any environment and tools to help you achieve your goals.

## Rules

These are the time-honored principles that I find are as relevant as tomorrow's newspaper as they were in years gone by.

1. Develop QA and QC. I call these important two traits Quality Alliances and Quantum Competence. You have to have strong alliances and contacts that you know and more importantly, know you in a very favorable and positive way. You also have to have the competence that is unique and sets you apart from your peers. If you are just another "nice person" that can do what everyone else can, you are in trouble in today's commodity-oriented world.
2. Commit to never-ending improvement. How many books have you read this past month? How is your physical health? How are your quality family and personal relationships doing? How are you doing spiritually? All of these key areas in life require constant attention. You can't work on only one and then prop your feet on the desk, lace your hands behind your head and give up. It is an on-going process. But that is the way of life. Once you stop, you die. Keep moving and keep fresh, new ideas popping in your mind.
3. Innovate Constantly. Today's fast-moving environment doesn't sit still and won't tolerate a company that does. You have to continually have new ideas and new products that the marketplace wants. This requires the courage to discard the old. Do it on your own before the competition forces you to do it.
4. Commit to get actively involved in at least one new organization for networking and learning. If you're already in one that is promising, resolve to do something unique that brings results. Make a public commitment on select goals so others can hold your feet to the fire.
5. Dedicate yourself to learning at least one new skill. It might be a new language. It might be a class on cooking. It might be a local college class on marketing. Don't forget the online classes that are available now. With high speed access to the Net you can access a world of information. Remember to check out what is available in other countries which can give you an advantage over what the competition is doing in your own country.

## Tools

Here is my annual list of tools and goodies.

1. **PDA.** This is becoming a must-have tool for mobile professionals. Whether you go with Palm or Pocket PC. I use a Palm Tungsten T and am pleased with it. You need something that can quickly (key term) give you access to names, your calendar, and writing memos. I like the Tungsten T3 and the Treo 600 (cell phone and PDA in one)

today. On the Pocket PC side, Dell has some outstanding tools with the Axim line (X5,X3 and X3i). This is a great tool for today's mobile professional who needs answers fast and wants to connect better.

2. **High Speed Access to the Net.** Whether you use DSL, Cable, T1 or some other way to get high-speed access to the Net, this is imperative for serious business uses. You can learn more and get more done. Be sure to check out AT&T's new Edge system, which can provide access wirelessly up to 200Kbps for mobile professionals.
3. **Wi-Fi (wireless LAN).** Whether you call it Wi-Fi, 802.11b/g or Wireless LAN, you need this method of connecting high speed to the Internet without plugging into wires. I use Wi-Fi on my laptop (built-in, which is the best option) to check e-mail, send notes, design and modify my website and basically stay in touch with the world from most anywhere I happen to be. In the office, it allows me flexibility and freedom to move about without attaching a bunch of wires. For the small businessperson, Wi-Fi represents mobility and ease of access to prospects and customers faster and easier. That translates to more money generated! Get the idea?
4. **Laptop.** As a mobile professional you need a laptop that meets your needs. Since each person's needs are unique, you have to find what works for you. As a bare minimum I recommend a Windows XP machine with a minimum of 256MB of RAM, at least a 40GB hard drive, Wi-Fi, at least 2 USB 2.0 ports, IEEE 1394 connection (also called Firewire on Macs or iLink on Sony computers), an LCD display for ease of viewing (check with Dell on their low-priced monitors) and DVD-R/CD-ROM writing capability (storage and for information dissemination).

For software, make sure you have and use a strong contact manager. I'm using ACT! and love it. I use it to grab business cards (with CardScan) and add them quickly to my database. Then with ACT's built-in HTML editor (easy to use) I design customized, color e-mail marketing pieces that stand out, are welcome (not Spam as I use permission-based marketing) and powerfully effective. If you only master one tool with software, this is the one that can generate serious money-making opportunities for you.

Now is a great time to reflect on what good things are happening and why. It is also a great time to think about how you can improve and make it better for the rest of the year. 2004 is poised to be a great year economically. It is a year that holds great potential for those that are prepared. You're heard the admonitions for a couple of years to get ready for the turnaround. That turnaround is here (check the economic numbers for an economy that is coming back strong). Don't waste the opportunity.

Take action now!

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