

## IBD'S 10 SECRETS TO SUCCESS

Investor's Business Daily has spent years analyzing leaders and successful people in all walks of life. Most have 10 traits that, when combined, can turn dreams into reality. Each day, we highlight one.

**3 TAKE ACTION:** Goals are nothing without action. Don't be afraid to get started. Just do it.

## Partner Up, Get Solutions

**3** To be an effective problem-solver, blend creativity with collaboration.

Regardless of the problem you're tackling, viewing participants as partners can lead to solutions you might not think of otherwise, say James Tamm and Ronald Luyet in "Radical Collaboration."

A former judge, Tamm is well-versed in dispute resolution. Luyet has consulted with Fortune 500 firms for more than three decades. Both are executives in the South San Francisco, Calif.-based firm Business Consultants Network.

To spur action toward a solution: **■ Don't assume a fixed pie.** Two firms are pursuing a research project as part of a joint venture. The research has unexpectedly led to a new product — with more planned down the road. Dividing profits on the first product has become complicated, resulting in an impasse.

Both sides might increase flexibility by negotiating profits on future products as well, leading to more options and greater give-and-take.

**■ Make employees your collaborators.** By taking worker input more seriously, the Eastern region of the U.S. Forest Service boosted the number of employee suggestions from 63 to more than 6,000 annually, Tamm and Luyet said. The result was innovation, more streamlined methods and greater cost savings.

In short, the service solved problems it didn't know it had.

**■ Play what-if.** A training firm Tamm and Luyet consulted faced cost cutting after losing a major client. The owners thought they could survive if they reduced costs by roughly 10%.

But then they thought about how they'd reorganize the firm if starting out on a shoestring.

They uncovered two high-maintenance areas that brought in little revenue. They eliminated them, cut overhead by 25% and boosted profitability.

**■ Be creative; reframe issues.** Tamm and Luyet tell the story of an acquaintance who had a dream job at a great company. The only fly in the ointment? His boss. The situation got so bad that he considered consulting an executive-search firm to find another job.

Then he reframed the issue. Instead of asking, "How do I get away from my boss?" he asked: "How can I get my boss away from me?"

He went to the executive-search firm — but instead of selling himself, he touted his manager, presenting a list of achievements in current and past jobs.

A few weeks later, his manager got a cold-call from the firm. The boss went on to greener pastures, and the employee's problem was solved.

**■ Check and double-check.** If you're in a new position, or lack experience in solving certain types of problems, make facts your ally, say management coaches Ethan Rasiel and Paul Friga in "The McKinsey Mind."

Their advice: crunch numbers, check data, do the due diligence.

**■ Try a different perspective.** If a problem seems unsolvable, try seeing things from the other side's vantage point. Break the problem down as you think they might. It could lead to common ground and a raft of new solutions.

**■ Break issues into sub-issues.** You'll boost the number of possible trade-offs. **Cord Cooper**