

Business May Be Your Life – But – Life Is *Your* Business

PART V: CREATING YOUR LIFE^{A,B}



James A. Cusumano, PhD

“The best way to predict the future is to invent it.”
Alan Kay – Apple Fellow, Apple, Inc.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- You can create a practical, 1-, 3-, and 5-year life plan.
- This plan can act as a compass in directing your efforts, and will almost guarantee that you meet your goals in a timely manner.
- It is critical first to develop your personal vision, mission, and values
- Your values can be divided into “Six Spheres for Universal Growth.”
- Goals must be focused and with specific dates for completion.

First Step

Okay, so now you know your purpose in life and you have found your true passion¹. How do you create a personal plan to make sure that your future unfolds in an effective and manageable way? Some people can do this mentally and never take the time to write down a single goal on paper. However, most of us profit immensely from a more rigorous process, wherein we struggle to identify specific meaningful goals for a rolling 1-, 3-, and 5-year period. Once the process is completed, it is straightforward to update and modify the plan on an annual basis. But the first time, the required effort can be significant to get to a useful product (see **Figure 1**).

Before coming up with a life plan, it is critical to know and state your vision and mission in life. Your vision should create a picture in your mind's eye of how you want your world to be. Your mission should summarize in a single sentence, the role you want to play in helping to move the world in that direction.

After you clearly understand and have internalized your vision and mission statements, you should answer the following critical question, “What are the

core values that guide me through life?” These are not necessarily guidelines that are ethically right or wrong; they are fundamental truths and beliefs that are important to you. They are an intimate part of your consciousness. They guide your every action – a kind of internal compass. Some of them may be “genetic” in the sense that you enter this world with them; and others may be “environmental,” developed early on in life, a consequence of your personal contacts and external influences.

When you violate any of your basic values, you feel bad and don't function well. When your life is in perfect harmony with your values, you are exhilarated and are effective and efficient at your endeavors. And when these values align with your true sense of purpose in life – that fundamental internal core essence that differentiates you from others – intense passion is generated and you are able to pursue your life dream and experience a great level of continuous happiness and fulfillment (see **Figure 2**).

Vision and Mission

By way of example, my personal vision and mission over the years have consistently been as follows:

VISION: A better world for all through a balance of body, mind and spirit.

MISSION: Through my skills in business, technology, entertainment and communications, to establish and grow profitable enterprises that contribute significantly to humanity and are based my personal vision.

A Matter of Values

Your fundamental life values can be conveniently divided into “Six Spheres for Universal Growth.” Each of these spheres affects the way you function. By example, I share with you part of the results of my personal plan, updated at the end of 2004 for the years 2005–2010.

VALUES

I determined my values several decades ago, and they have not changed over time. What has changed over time are the specific goals I set for myself for the subsequent 1, 3, and 5 year periods. Here is a summary of my personal values.

1. **Professional** – What is the underlying principle that guides all of your professional efforts? After much thought, I formulated the following value for my professional life:

I channel my professional energies into building profitable enterprises that address my vision and are based on a culture that fosters the personal and professional growth of all participants. These enterprises market products and/or services that help advance our quality of life.

2. **Financial** – How important is money to you and

how will you use it? My goal here has always been as follows:

I increase my family's wealth as necessary to accomplish our personal and professional goals, but not as a means simply to purchase material things that exclusively feed the ego with short-term gratification.

3. **Social** – How important are family, friends and the community, and where do they fit in your scheme of things? My guidance has been:

I take the lead in strengthening family ties, developing new friendships, and building on my current relationships. Through my talents in entrepreneurship,

Figure 1: The Alchemist at Work – Although it requires significant effort the first time through, creating a personal life plan is not alchemy, it is a straight forward process



^{A)} EDITOR'S NOTE—This is Part V in a series of articles based on the author's experience as an entrepreneur, having founded several successful businesses, including Catalytica Pharmaceuticals, Inc., a billion-dollar public company. His experience base spans “5 lives”—A multimillion record sales recording artist; R&D Director for Exxon; Chairman & founder of 2 public companies; CEO, founder and Executive Producer for Chateau Wally films; Chairman & Owner of Chateau Mcely, an international award-winning luxury hotel & SPA. This article is extracted from his latest book, currently in preparation and entitled, “My Little Book of Business—Tales of Purpose, Passion & Enterprise.”

^{B)} The author may be reached at Jim@ChateauMcely.Com.



Figure 2: Sir Edmund Hillary & Tenzing Norgay Were First To Conquer Mt. Everest [May 5, 1953] – With a plan in hand it is possible to accomplish challenging goals in a timely manner



communication, technology, leadership and entertainment, I contribute financially and in personal time to the needs of society that I feel will make this a better world.

4. **Spiritual** – What is sacred to you and how does this generally manifest itself in your life? My guiding principle has been:

I diligently study the spiritual and scientific nature of consciousness as a means of seeking answers to the fundamental questions of life and the universe.

5. **Health** – How important is your health and vitality and what do you do about it? My actions are guided by:

I stay healthy and vital in body, mind and spirit through daily exercise and meditation.

6. **Knowledge** – How important is past, present and future knowledge and what do you do about it? My commitment to acquiring knowledge is as follows:

I continuously develop my mind through leadership and learning. I build on my strengths and address areas in which I seek improvement. I enhance my being through courses, reading, travel, self-learning, self-reflection, team building and asking for feed-

Figure 3: An Asteroid Destroyed The Dinosaurs 65 Million Years Ago – A good plan not only helps accomplish challenging goals, but also it avoids pitfalls



"All I'm saying is now is the time to develop the technology to deflect an asteroid."

back from family, friends and fellow workers. I integrate this feedback and learning into building and honing my persona, my mind, and my psyche.

As was the case in answering the **FOUR QUESTIONS** in Part III of this series¹, it is imperative that you provide absolutely truthful responses to the questions that lead to your development and statement of these values, not those which you feel are "correct" or that you believe others would want you to embrace. Again, I suggest that you find a convenient time and place when you are alone and completely relaxed. Meditation is a powerful resource for this exercise. There should be no interruptions, no clocks, no telephones, just a relaxed conducive environment that will help pull the absolute truth from your consciousness. Don't expect immediate answers to your quest. In good time you will "move into the answers." It may take a day, a week, or a month. The answers will come (see **Figure 3**).

The Goals

Next, for each of these unifying principles and values, you then set a series of goals for the next 1, 3 and 5 years, with a more detailed focus on the upcoming year. Each goal should be followed by an action plan with dates. As an example, I share one goal from my Professional Sphere for the year 2005. There are usually several goals (1-3) and accompanying specific action plans.

Professional Goal #1:

Within 3 years, I will help build Chateau Mcely into an international successful retreat and spa, and within a 5-year timeframe I will create a program to bring leading thinkers – global "Changemakers" – to the Czech Republic and to Chateau Mcely to discuss implementable solutions to challenging social issues such as energy security, climate change, and the need for more conscious leadership in business.

Actions:

1. Recruit and train an effective core management team by March 1, 2005, leading team building and training exercises monthly, March through December.
2. Create an international marketing strategy by April 2, 2005 (April 1 is a no, no date!).
3. Establish a reliable mechanism to financially manage Chateau Mcely – April 2, 2005.
4. By December 31, 2005 explore 3-4 mechanisms to create and brand a seminar program at Chateau Mcely on Conscious Leadership.
5. Business will be financially breakeven by December 31, 2007.
6. Open for business: Soft opening – May 1, 2006; Formal opening – September 1, 2006.

Use the same process for **Professional Goals #2 and #3**, and also for each of the 1-3 goals associated with your **Financial, Relationships, Spirituality, Health and Knowledge Spheres**.

Finally, after this exercise is completed, to help maintain your life in balance, it is important to make the following commitment concerning **Time Management**:

I balance my life within the Six Spheres for Universal Growth. I do so by reviewing daily how I spend my time and I adjust my actions, when necessary, to be in accord with proper balance of my values and goals.

It is also useful to carry in your wallet or briefcase, an abbreviated version of your 1-year goals so that you can easily look at them daily.

Once this process is completed, it is only necessary to update your plan each year. Your values are unlikely to change, but your goals will change. This seems like a lot of work. It is. But it's worth the effort if you use the plan and maintain a balanced life to achieve the goals you set for yourself (see **Figure 4**). As I have mentioned in a previous article, *success is achieving in a timely manner, those goals that you set for yourself*². You will be amazed at what you can accomplish in a year, in a decade – in a lifetime!

James A. Cusumano, PhD ■

Figure 4: Proverbial Ostrich With His Head In The Ground – A plan is better than no plan at all



¹ James A. Cusumano, "Business May Be Your Life – But – Life Is Your Business, Part III: Finding Your Passion And Purpose," *Leaders Magazine, Volume II, p. 142 (2010)*.

² James A. Cusumano, "Business May Be Your Life – But – Life Is Your Business, Part IV: Listen To The Omens," *Leaders Magazine, Volume III, p. 104 (2010)*.

About the Author: James A. Cusumano is Chairman and owner of Chateau Mcely (www.ChateauMcely.Com), chosen in 2007 by the European Union as the only "Green" 5-star luxury hotel in Central and Eastern Europe and in 2008 by the World Travel Awards as the Leading Green Hotel in the World. He is a former Research Director for Exxon, and subsequently founded two public companies in Silicon Valley, one in clean power generation, the other in pharmaceuticals manufacture via environmentally-benign, low-cost, catalytic technologies. While he was Chairman and CEO, the latter – Catalytica Pharmaceuticals, Inc. – grew in less than 5 years, to a \$1 billion enterprise with 2,000 employees. He is co-author of "Freedom from Mid-East Oil," recently released by World Business Academy Press (www.WorldBusiness.Org) and can be reached at Jim@ChateauMcely.Com.