Ensure Positive Business Outcomes & Results:

Leveraging The Success Chain

Ensuring Positive Business Outcomes & Results: Leveraging The Success Chain

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Introduction: Turning the Past into Positive Outcomes

Within every workplace in the world, employees arrive at work each day with minds that are swirling with personal opinions, perspectives, attitudes, expectations, and assumptions. Each person has a rich background of experiences - not just work-related experiences, but also education, life and societal experiences that shape their belief systems, behaviors, and even success.

We can't see straight into our coworkers' minds … but what if we could? What kinds of things would we see? Maybe we'd see someone who feels totally confused about the future. Maybe we'd see someone who feels composed and confident. Additionally, we would see those things change from moment to moment, and situation to situation.

All of these swirling thoughts, in turn, are reflected in each person's actions and behaviors not only personally, but also professionally. Each thought they experience, each assumption they make, each habitual expectation, affects how they interact with others and get their jobs done.

Employers can't change their employees' past experiences, but the employees themselves can reframe their past experiences in a fresh way that can drive toward positive outcomes. With leadership development and ongoing coaching, a company can support its employees in identifying these things, understanding how they might be affecting their work, and building a shared future that looks better from the inside out.

In this whitepaper, we'll look at the Success Chain and its impact on our professional lives. We'll explore how personal experiences can affect our work identities, and how anyone can use the power of the Success Chain to shift their thoughts and behaviors to achieve long-term positive outcomes.

What is The Success Chain?

Before we discuss the Success Chain, first let's look at an even more fundamental question: *What is success?*

Everyone measures success a little differently. It is something very personal to each one of us. It's the warm, fuzzy feeling we get when something turns out the way we hoped it would, or we hit a goal. For some people, success feels most real when they receive praise from someone else, like their boss or spouse. For others, it's about achieving a personal dream, checking something off their bucket list, or even just accomplishing a task.

Success is at its core a "feeling". The level of success you feel depends on your own attachment to the results. For example, someone might visualize success as getting rich and having $10,000,000. Getting there through one's own efforts is a different feeling than gaining that wealth by winning the lottery. One thing is for sure: Success is a wonderful feeling. It immediately makes us wonder: How do I get more of this? How can I expand my own capacity for success?

The answer is found in the Success Chain, a model that shows the interactions among various factors in our lives: our fundamental conditioning and experiences, our attitudes and habits of thought, our behaviors and actions, the results and outcomes we achieve, and finally, our success.

The **SUCCESS** Chain

SUCCESS

▲

RESULTS+OUTCOMES

▲

ACTIONS+BEHAVIORS

▲

ATTITUDES+HABITS OF THOUGHT

▲

CONDITIONING+EXPERIENCE

At its core, the Success Chain is based on your personal life experiences. They have a significant impact on the way you think, feel, and act, and as a result, can determine the level of your success.

The Success Chain's power comes from realizing the strong impact our thinking has on our behaviors and actions. We have the ability to think better, so therefore we can do better. We can think positively, take ownership, be proactive, and our actions will follow from our thinking.

The Success Chain is a system that, when adapted, trains us to choose to view and do things differently. This creates better results further up the chain, which means that over time we will see more positive outcomes and increased success in our lives.

In the next few sections of this whitepaper, we'll look at each step of the Success Chain in more detail. Along the way, consider how each piece of the chain relates to your own personal and professional success.

The Impact of Conditioning and Experiences

At the bottom of the Success Chain are your conditioning and experiences. These are each person's set of individual circumstances, encountered over time, which form your uniquely personal perspective.

Some of our most impactful experiences are those that occur with spaced repetition, which is the day-to-day repetition of experiences you encounter in your surroundings and interpersonal relationships. Spaced repetition demonstrates how the world tends to operate around you. Your human nature encourages you to build assumptions, expectations, and tendencies to react certain ways in certain situations.

For example, imagine a child whose family moves frequently. This child develops a feeling of constantly being the new kid in class, struggling to keep up, and never forming deep friendships. As a result, this child begins believing, "Moving is bad." They associate it with difficulty and pain, and begin to think, "Making friends is not worth it, since we aren't going to be here long."

Later in life, this same belief could continue and limit their pursuit of hobbies, relationships, and professional opportunities. While that conditioning is viewed as negative, what if this person could use those experiences to their advantage and reprogram their assumptions to think, "Yes, moving a lot was difficult, but it has made me rely on myself, which is also a good thing!"

Is this possible?

Great news: Yes, it is possible. I can say that, because this is a true story of mine -- this whitepaper's co-author, Darby Vannier, Director of Operations and Technology at Leadership Resources. I moved many times during my childhood. In fact, I lived in 5 different towns with 5 different schools before I reached 7th grade.

I didn't know it at the time, or even early in my career, but learning about the Success Chain helped me understand that my childhood experiences didn't hold me back and limit the rest of my life. Instead, unknowingly, I used the levels of the Success Chain to reframe my past experiences and use them as a positive thing. Looking back, I realized that moving opened up my world and showed me how important self-reliance is in life, and taught me to use it to my advantage. It has also presented opportunities to discover new things.

Conditioning and experiences can be a positive or a negative.

They can yield a positive result, or they can cause people to feel they are lacking in some way. In a workplace context, these experiences can help people be more successful, or they can limit a person's success because of the preconceived beliefs and assumptions they've developed.

For example, imagine a project manager named Alan. Alan is a smart guy who is qualified for his job and was even named Employee of the Month. However, he doesn't have a college degree and that's something that has always bugged him. In his daily work, he interacts with many intelligent engineers and often feels inferior to them. When someone compliments his work, Alan is self-deprecating and says, "It's no big deal."

Over time, Alan has developed some negative and limiting beliefs about himself, his abilities, and his capabilities. In the next section, we'll continue Alan's story and look more closely at the impact of detrimental thoughts.

How Attitudes and Thoughts Have an Impact

Your daily attitudes and thoughts are more than just passing ideas. They're actually *habits of thought* formed deep inside your mind and etched into your neural pathways, created by experiences in your life.

However, these habits of thought are not permanently hard-wired into your brain. Scientists are discovering that the adult brain is quite flexible and capable of forming new habits through a process known as [neuroplasticity.](#)

This means it is possible to take a negative habit of thought like "I am not smart enough" and replace it with "I am becoming smarter every day." You can replace "Everybody is more successful than me" with "I have achieved incredible success in my own life so far." Those that dread Monday mornings might say, "Ugh, I have to go to work." A simple yet significant change might be saying instead, "I get to go to work today."

Let's take another look at Alan the project manager. All signs point to him being successful. He manages complex projects and a team of people. He received an award. People are complimenting him on his work. But deep down, he doesn't feel successful.

What if Alan could rewire his thinking to see himself as others see him? Instead of thinking, "I'm not as smart as these engineers," he could think, "Who cares if I don't have a college degree? I am successful! It hasn't limited my ability and as proof of that, I'm Employee of the Month!"

With new habits of thought, you can reframe your professional life to view yourself through a lens of success. You ARE smart enough. You ARE good enough. Thinking this way becomes even easier over time because you'll see the results from the bottom to the top of the success chain, over and over again.

While changing those habits of thought can be highly beneficial, it isn't always easy to make that shift, and certainly isn't easy to make that shift quickly. The good news is that just becoming aware of your habits of thought and how they affect you means that you can begin to make informed choices that help you in your life and career, even before you make that shift permanent. That awareness essentially takes you from being unconsciously incompetent to being consciously incompetent. It means that while you may still be experiencing habits of thought that could limit you, you are aware of them and take the steps necessary to use that to help dictate your actions and behaviors accordingly.

Consider these questions to ask yourself about your professional life:

- How could your own thinking be holding you back?
- What assumptions do you make about yourself every day in your work?
- Is there a way to think differently about a specific, frustrating situation?
- Is there anything you're thinking you can't do?
- How could you start thinking differently today, tomorrow, and in the future?

Actions and Behaviors in the Workplace

So we've discussed how our experiences lead to our habits of thought. Now let's explore what we do with that thinking. After all, it's not enough to simply think positive thoughts; in order to truly pursue success, you must also take positive action. How we think directly affects how we act and react.

Thinking back on my own childhood again, it's clear that I tended to avoid other kids on the playground because I'd been moving so frequently. I had decided it wasn't worth it to pursue friendships to only move once again and leave those new friends. Therefore, I didn't make an effort to seek out other kids and get to know them. My beliefs affected my behavior.

In the same way, an employee's deep-seated beliefs can affect their behavior at work. For example, Alan the project manager I referred to earlier might start acting jealous and bitter toward his engineer coworkers because of his own limiting beliefs about himself and his lack of secondary education. This behavior could damage interdepartmental relationships, affect morale, and limit productivity.

However, changing the habit of thought, as described above, can then lead to a change in behavior, which affects your potential for future success. This is all part of the interlinked steps of the Success Chain. If Alan had realized how much the engineers relied on him for maintaining their project plans and keeping things moving forward, he might acknowledge his worth on the team as something that's critical and valued, causing him to behave in a more positive and confident manner, changing perceptions of his coworkers.

A change in belief leads to a change in behavior, which then leads to a change in your ability to reach personal and professional success. In the next section, we'll examine results and outcomes within the Success Chain model.

Achieving Results and Outcomes

At this point, we have discussed how our experiences lead to our habits of thought, which dictate our behaviors. Results and outcomes are the last step in the Success Chain before success itself. They are part of the endgame, in terms of obtaining the results you seek to achieve greater success.

In a personal context, an outcome might be that your beliefs and actions have limited your ability to form new bonds with people you meet in life. That's what happened to me. My childhood inability to seek friendships persisted into college until I made a strong effort to change my own thoughts and behaviors.

In a professional context, the results and outcomes can present themselves as poor employee interactions, unwillingness to pursue promotions, difficulty taking charge, and an inability to feel proud of any success you achieve.

Once again, if we look at our project manager Alan, due to his beliefs about himself he might answer engineers' questions without confidence, or put off answering them altogether. He might not speak up in meetings or proactively share ideas, because he feels inferior. And, Alan might not view himself as the type of person who leads and takes ownership of issues.

Over time, this creates a vicious cycle that limits an individual's success and can even limit an entire company's success, too. **If your company is full of people who don't believe in themselves and therefore don't act proactively and with confidence, it can affect everything from daily teamwork to the company's long-term financial gains.**

This can even occur because of the workplace. Consider a team that gets a new leader who constantly talks down to them, won't listen, and takes credit for their successes while blaming them for failures. This can cause an entire team to pull back on suggestions, not offer to go above and beyond, and even consider leaving the company. Even once that negative leader is replaced with a strong, positive leader, it can take a long time before that team can adjust their habits of thought and behaviors accordingly.

In actuality, Alan - who is a real client of Leadership Resources - did not allow himself to be sucked into the vicious cycle. With the help of a leadership coach, he took proactive steps to improve his communication. He became very responsive to coworkers' requests. He quit staying silent and took ownership of issues, helping the engineers become more productive. He was much happier in his job, and his boss was much happier too.

In my case, I not only took steps to build relationships, I also turned the negative into a positive by taking my self-reliance and using it to my advantage to become highly detailed, extremely loyal, and knowledgeable in many areas. All of which has served me well throughout my career.

Defining Success

At the beginning of this whitepaper, we asked the question, "What is success?" and discovered that the answer is highly personal. The definition of success depends on your context and your individual goals. But you can get an idea of your definition of success if you think about what could be missing from your personal and professional life.

Would I be as successful in my career if I had not taken that negative habit of thought and turned it into a positive? No. Using that self-reliance and focusing on building relationships has been a cornerstone of my success throughout my career. That's one reason why it was so important to get past my childhood beliefs and thoughtfully follow the steps of the Success Chain.

Would Alan be an active contributor to his team, helping to solve problems and mitigate risks for the engineers? No. He would be feeling badly about his abilities and have remained afraid to contribute at a high level.

The real power of the Success Chain is awareness. By being aware of the levels of the Success Chain, you will now be able to identify negative habits of thought and turn them positive, and use positive habits of thought to their fullest potential. Even when you have a moment of self-doubt, the Success Chain is there to support you in building new thoughts and habits that propel you toward success.

Gaining More Positive Success From The Success Chain

Whether your conditions and experiences are positive or negative, your ability to take something positive away from them is a conscious choice. Recognize the power of negative thinking in your life, because it can poison your attitudes and habits of thought.

For example, a child who doesn't seek out friendships may become extremely self-reliant as a result. The same conditioning that created a habit of avoiding others created a habit of relying on oneself to get things done, which is a positive skill that not all kids, teens, and young adults possess.

In fact, "Get $#it Done" is one of the core values at Leadership Resources, and it's the one that I love the most. I truly believe my childhood nurtured an ability to be self-reliant that has supported my success in many aspects of life, including my professional achievements. My personal Success Chain reliably leads to getting $#it done day after day!

I'd also like to point out that the Success Chain is non-linear. As you become familiar with how it works in your life, you'll find that it flows from bottom to top, top to bottom, feeding in a continuous loop to create additional success in the future.

A Final Thought on The Success Chain

The success of an organization is driven by the success of its individuals and the results they achieve. The results those individuals achieve are built on their actions and behaviors. Their actions and behaviors are dictated by their habits of thought. Their habits of thought are created by their experiences.

Ending Negative Thinking Through Leadership Development

We've all heard that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again but expecting a different result. Instead, we'd like to challenge you to try something different.

End negative patterns of thought and behavior. Reconsider your daily experiences and examine whether your own beliefs and habits could be holding you back, or even affecting your entire workplace. Reshape how you view your own potential and take action to embrace the possibility of unlimited success. People follow you for the leader you are today. However, the leader you want to be in three years requires development to help you get there. Development is the intentional aspect of change, and we need spaced repetition to condition a person to change. This type of change is not easy and requires a constant effort from multiple sources.

Alternatively, disruptive change can come at any time in one's life without warning in the form of a life event, such as a sick child or parent, lost job, or one's own medical diagnosis. Once it disrupts you and your life, you cannot remove it. Development and coaching assists leaders to have positive habits of thought when inevitable disruptive change happens, as well.

Ready to take the next step? Leadership Resources is here to help. With leadership development coaching, you can help employees recognize attitudes and habits of thought so they can start making shifts toward more positive thinking and actions.

About Leadership Resources

Leadership Resources helps you achieve the vision for your business. Clients work with Leadership Resources to develop high-performing leaders and create a culture of accountability. Through strategic planning, leadership development, and proprietary technology called Accelerate, clients leverage the unique processes and guidance necessary for their organizations to ultimately achieve a larger vision.

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