

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.

- 1 **HOW YOU THINK IS EVERYTHING:** Always be positive. Think success, not failure. Beware of a negative environment.
- 2 **DECIDE UPON YOUR TRUE DREAMS AND GOALS:** Write down your specific goals and develop a plan to reach them.
- 3 **TAKE ACTION:** Goals are nothing without action. Don't be afraid to get started. Just do it.
- 4 **NEVER STOP LEARNING:** Go back to school or read books. Get training and acquire skills.
- 5 **BE PERSISTENT AND WORK HARD:** Success is a marathon, not a sprint. Never give up.
- 6 **LEARN TO ANALYZE DETAILS:** Get all the facts, all the input. Learn from your mistakes.
- 7 **FOCUS YOUR TIME AND MONEY:** Don't let other people or things distract you.
- 8 **DON'T BE AFRAID TO INNOVATE; BE DIFFERENT:** Following the herd is a sure way to mediocrity.
- 9 **DEAL AND COMMUNICATE WITH PEOPLE EFFECTIVELY:** No person is an island. Learn to understand and motivate others.
- 10 **BE HONEST AND DEPENDABLE; TAKE RESPONSIBILITY:** Otherwise, Nos. 1-9 won't matter.

DECIDE UPON YOUR TRUE DREAMS AND GOALS

Deal With Bad Employees

2 One Christmas, attorney Martin Gringer's phone rang. It was one of his clients, a commercial bakery.

"One of their drivers had left his truck filled with merchandise in the middle of his run and disappeared," Gringer told IBD.

Gringer and the bakery knew what to do. "We decided to fire the driver, even though it was Christmas," Gringer said.

Such moves can be tough.

"People have a reluctance to comment on other people's behavior," said psychologist Billie Blair, owner of Leading and Learning Inc.

In the U.S., she says, many folks hold liberty as crucial, which can make it hard for employers or managers to intervene when it comes to questionable behavior. "We've set up the notion that everyone has the right to act the way they want, so we've given a great deal of leeway as far as how someone is expected to act in the workplace," she said.

Employees who drive you crazy can come in all forms. Sometimes you could deal with a gossip or an outright liar. Then you could face someone who falls apart at the slightest criticism. Or someone who calls in sick frequently. Or perhaps someone who's a loner in an office where teamwork's a cornerstone.

"Many bad employees would create problems in any situation or workplace," said Gini Graham Scott, author of "A Survival Guide to Managing Employees From Hell." "But sometimes what makes for a difficult employee in one working culture . . . may make for a highly productive and valuable employ-

ee in another setting."

If you have a stinker employee on your payroll, here are some pointers for coming up with a solution:

■ **Find out what's wrong.** Until you grasp the problem, it'll be harder for you to come up with a workable solution. "Talking with a mentor is one way to start that stepping-back process," Blair said.

"Factor in your office culture, personal style, the employee's employment history," Scott said. "How serious the breach, the importance of the employee's work and how easy it will be to find a replacement, should you be considering termination."

■ **Get a grip.** "More often than not, emotions will get in the way of solving the problem," Blair said. She recommends writing down what's happened and waiting a few hours before reacting to an incident.

■ **Get it down on paper.** Documentation's important for legal reasons. It can also help you be objective. "Do not make special rules for those who are good performers," Gringer said. "For example, a 'good employee' should not be allowed to come in late all the time and 'bad employees' punished for it."

You can also put pen to paper to brainstorm innovative solutions, Scott says.

■ **Talk.** If you're willing to work through the dilemma, be upfront with employees about how they need to change and what'll happen if they don't, including a deadline for improvement.

"That sets the tone for solving the problem," Blair said.

Amy Alexander