

Lifestyle Choices

Written by Barthélemy Barbancourt
Saturday, 06 February 2010 10:31 -

Every now and again I am reminded of things that hold people back.

Thursday morning I got an email about some work. I emailed the head hunter back and it sounded good so I went for it. We hashed out the details and I set up a phone interview for 9AM Friday morning. The phone interview went well and the client would like me to be in site next week to kick off the project.

This job is through a temp firm so I have to jump through all of their hoops even though I already do work for another division of this client (a Fortune 500 corporation). So I stopped by the office with my passport. I authorized a background check and took a drug test Friday afternoon. I called my insurance guy and had the firm added to my O&E policy, I scanned and emailed my articles of incorporation and set up direct deposit for the corporate account. This was all done by Friday at 5:00 PM and I'll be working (and billing) my new client my the middle of next week.

My point is that there were a lot of areas where this deal could have failed that depended entirely on the lifestyle choices that I make. I don't do drugs, so I can take a drug test any time. I don't commit crimes, so a background check isn't an issue. These two seemingly small decisions allow me to charge more, get more work and generally project a level of confidence that drug users and criminals don't have.

I know that some people think casual marijuana use is no problem. I don't think pot is worse than booze, but it is illegal. If you want to compete in my field on my level, you can't be involved with illegal drugs in any way.

There are some milestones to success that are easy to spot like a BS degree, an MBA or a certification. They are often the keys that open doors. Once you are through the door, there are literally thousands of other smaller things that will influence your level of success. How you dress, how you act, your attitude and even your height influence your success in business (Tall people and attractive are more successful, in general) Some of these you can't control, but others you can.

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This is just one small part of why I always want to know more when someone tells me that they just can't get ahead. There is probably something they either aren't telling me or don't realize is holding them back.

So what do you think?