

# Is Your Magic Crystal Ball Failing to Deliver Your Business Results?

By Leanne Hoagland-Smith, M.S.

**D**o you ever wish that you could have a magical crystal ball that could instantaneously deliver to you your desired business results? Just think of the possibility of reversing lagging sales, chronic can't do attitudes, demanding customers or unproductive employees with just a wave of your hand. Suddenly, your daily issues have just been reversed and your fortune magically grows through improved sales, can do attitudes, loyal customers, dedicated employees and time to work on the business.

Even though most individuals know that placing their efforts into a crystal ball is probably a futile gesture, how many business owners inwardly hope for something magical to improve their daily issues? The real question is not whether a crystal ball exists, but why do business owners rely on hope instead of creating the future of their desires?

Several years ago after 9/11, I spoke to a group of 100 business owners about business building and asked them the following question: "How many of you suffered negative economic affects from this horrendous day of 9/11?"

Approximately 90-95 hands were raised high into the air. I then followed up with the second question: "How many of you have revisited your strategic plans to make the necessary course corrections to weather these uncertain economic times?" Five business owners lifted their hands. This response didn't surprise me because I have learned that many business owners and executives use hope as a business building

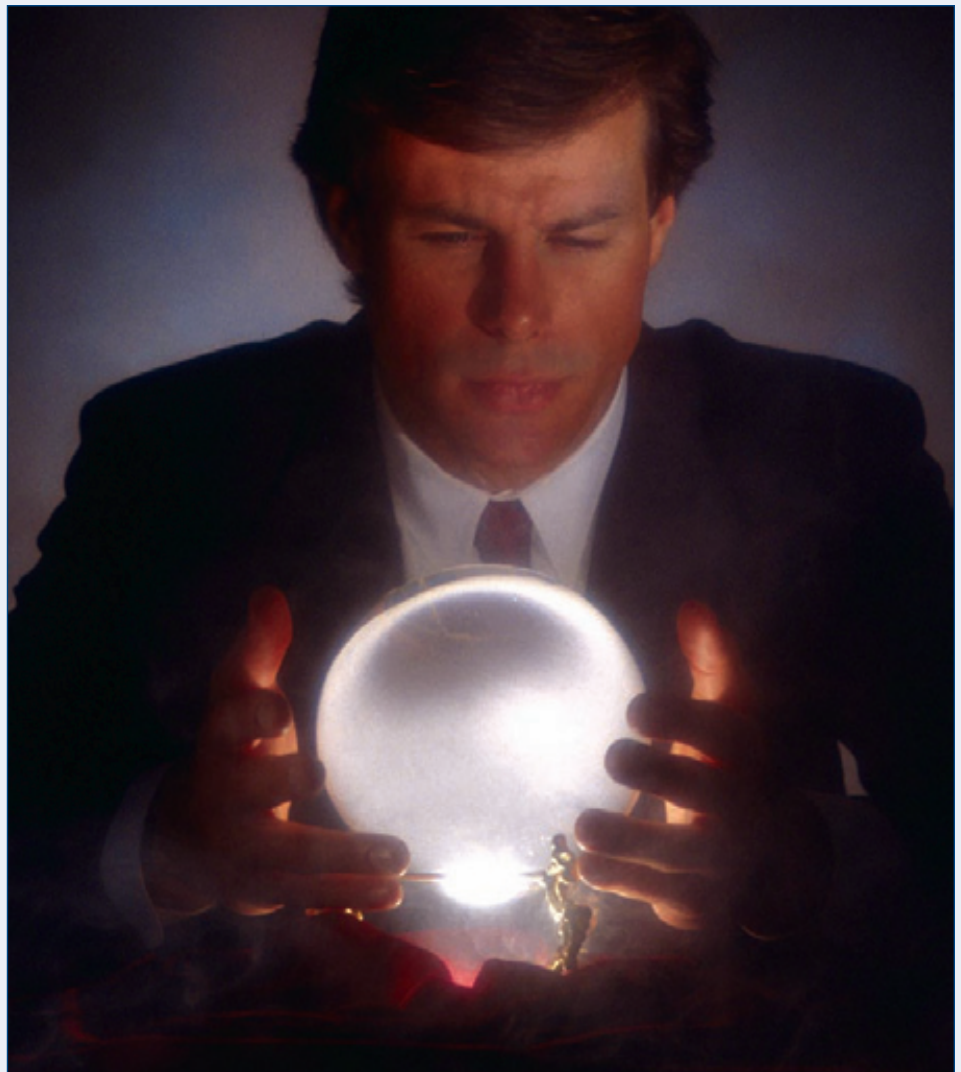
strategy instead of planning their work and working their plan.

For example, have you ever hoped that your employees would suddenly arrive in all smiles and eagerly embrace their work? Maybe, you walked in and began hoping that the current dismal sales will do an one eighty? Or have you hoped you could find just five minutes to work on future goals instead of being focused on yesterday's and today's problems?

So if hope is not a strategy for business results then what is?

What can deliver to you the desired results needed to not only allow your business to survive, but to actually thrive? And remember a strategy is a plan, method or series of maneuvers for obtaining a specific goal or result.

The "what" is not just one thing. This is why the magic ball or quick fix won't work. First, you must identify your beliefs or those foundational thought processes that are driving your attitudes demonstrated through your behaviors. If you believe that the



future will take care of itself (remember those business owners who resigned themselves to their current strategies), then fate will control your results or lack thereof.

Understanding how your mind sets you up for success or failure has been well documented. In the classic 20th century must read, *Think and Grow Rich*, Napoleon Hill developed 13 specific strategies to accumulate results. Seventy years later, Robert K. Cooper using over two decades of research built upon Hill's work in *Get Out of Your Own Way*. What both authors clearly share is that planned positive thinking when coupled with committed and directed actions will improve performance. And performance improvement is what every business continually strives to achieve.

Years ago, when earning my Masters, I came across *What to Do If You're Riding a Dead Horse?* and put it into one of those save files. (The source was unknown).

10. Buy a stronger whip.
9. Change riders.
8. Declare, "This is the way we have always ridden this horse."
7. Appoint a team to revive the horse.
6. Ignore the dead horse ... What dead horse?
5. Create a training session to improve your riding skills.
4. Outsource contractors to ride the dead horse.
3. Appoint a committee to study the dead horse.
2. Arrange to visit other sites to see how they ride dead horses.
1. Harness several dead horses together for increased speed.

Native Americans simply answer this question with one word – dismount. Yet, the brain which houses all of our belief systems enjoys staying the same course of action even when those actions are not working. For change is not something that the brain embraces. This reluctance to change allows hope to become the driving strategy.

**“Remember a strategy is a plan, method or series of maneuvers for obtaining a specific goal or result.”**

Beyond the “whats” of beliefs and attitudes are the “whats” of skills, knowledge and measurable goal achievement. To build your business demands sustainable and consistent results. The easiest way to achieve

results is to employ a goal achievement process that is embraced by every single employee professionally and personally. If your employees can't consistently achieve personal goals, how can they achieve organizational ones? If you wish to improve your business performance and multiply your business results in 2007, then your challenge is simply three-fold:

- Put your crystal ball away
- Plan your work through your strategic plan
- Work your plan through consistent goal execution. **N**

*With over 25 years experience in both private and public sectors, Leanne Hoagland-Smith writes, coaches and speaks on sustainable performance improvement. She helps organizations to multiply results by creating executable strategic plans along with the people to business skills necessary to “pull it off.” Visit [www.processspecialist.com](http://www.processspecialist.com) or email [leanne@processspecialist.com](mailto:leanne@processspecialist.com).*