

# THE 1,000-DAY CHALLENGE

*"A journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step."*

Ancient Chinese Motivational Speaker

Following is a pretty BIG concept or idea. It came about from my work with entrepreneurs and then became part of the "VISION PROCESS" for social entrepreneurs and For Impact organizations. It could change your organization ... your team ... your life.

Here's your CHALLENGE: **Build a 1,000-DAY PLAN** ... that will provide you a map or blueprint for almost **3 years ... 11 quarters ... and 33 months!!!** (Rule of 3!)

My CHALLENGE TO YOU is to do a **1,000-DAY JOURNEY** for your **ORGANIZATION** ... your **TEAM** (development office, project team, etc.) ... and even for **YOURSELF!**

Here are some thoughts:

## 1. **BRAINSTORM** the Big Stuff!

- *"Begin with the end in mind."* Ask yourself: **What** do you look like in 1,000 days??? **Where** do you want to be in 1,000 days? **Who** is on the Team? **Who** is on board?

\*Incorporate your BHAGs (Big Hairy Audacious Goals) directly into your 1,000-Day Journey.

## 2. Let it **FLOW!** Do a 'stream of consciousness' exercise. **JUST WRITE!**

- Sit down (solo) and start writing in the **PRESENT TENSE!** (*"We are impacting over 1,000 children a day; we have achieved our \$1 million objective and now we are into our campaign; we have begun a relationship with our best prospects and investors that is producing tremendous results, etc."*)

## 3. **TRANSFER** the specific **GOALS** to your **Quarterly Benchmark Sheet** (Page 6).

- The first four quarters should be very specific and have some depth and detail around **THREE** major accomplishments or goals per quarter.
- As you get further out in the 1,000 days ... the benchmarks become more 'big picture'.

## NO MORE 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLANS

I am an admitted 'contrarian freak' on strategic plans and business plans. They are nothing but a work of *ficiton* prepared by 'left-brained' accountant types.

If you're looking for an undecipherable, unimaginative, unread, thick binder to use as a bookend on your shelf... then, by all means, do a STRATGIC PLAN.

If, on the other hand, you are really, really into VISION, your MISSION/MEANING/MESSAGE, an ACTION PLAN that provides FOCUS and DIRECTION... then do a 1,000-Day JOURNEY and match it with a 1,000-Day FUNDING PLAN.

**NOTE:** The classic, tradiitonal model of 'CAMPAIGNS' is built around:

- Planning for two to three years...
- Running the campaign for five years...
- Provide a 'cooling off' period for two to three years...
- Then *"doing it all over again!"*

This five years on/five years off cycle misses so many opportunities, it's ridiculous.

If you buy into the concept that the development oepration/funding model is built on RELATIONSHIPS... then you would understand that RELATIONSHIPS are NOT CYCLICAL! You are ALWAYS building, enhancing and maximizing RELATIONSHIPS... whether you're in a campaign or not.

## THE 1,000 DAYS

1,000 days seems to be a 'perfect' length of time for most people. It's easy to project out three years or so. It's either a really long time (1,000 days!) or a really short time (1,000 days!), usually based on your age.

In a 1,000-Day Journey, you need to *"take the first step"* and all the rest of that Zen stuff, etc.

It's all about BHAGs, Thinking Big, Write It Down, It Will Happen ... , etc.

### YOUR ORGANIZATION

The 1,000-Day Journey for your ORGANIZATION becomes a great planning tool and replaces the strategic planning process. The idea is to literally project out where you will be/where you want to be in 1,000 days.

- You can get your stakeholders, your board, your senior leadership very involved in this 'process' though **Leadership Concensus Building**...
- You can create a **visual timeline** ...
- You can provide high **energy, enthusiasm** and a **positive 'can do' attitude**.
- At the same time, it's **challenging, scary**, and definitely pushes the proverbial envelope! However, *"If you are not living on the 'edge', you are taking up too much room."*

### YOUR TEAM

The 1,000-Day Plan for the TEAM could be built around talent needed, bus issues, or even math.

Here are some 'math' examples:

- What is your dollar goal for the development operation over the next 1,000 days? (Remember: Your goal is to write a **net, net, net check** to your For Impact Organization to **FUND THE VISION!**)

- Divide that 1,000-day goal into quarters, months and days!

For example, if you want to raise \$1 million in the next 1,000 days:

- That's \$1,000 a day (which could also be one Leadership Society member per day!)
- \$30,000 a month (which could also be three \$10,000 Major Gifts a month!)
- \$90,000 a quarter, etc.
- Divide those numbers by the development field (sales) staff (for many of you that's dividing in by '1!') and match accordingly.

## **YOUR OWN 1,000-DAY JOURNEY.**

While I think this works really well for an organization, development office, project team ... I think it also has some very interesting and exciting application to each of our **LIVES**.

This is just a 'bonus thought'. Three years ago in a coaching call with my old '*Life Coach*' Christopher Celeste (who by the way is a superstar when it comes to feedback, thinking big, and building simple), we talked a lot about re-inventing Tom Suddes, For Impact and Eagle Creek, etc. Out of that session, I developed my own personal **1,000-DAY JOURNEY**. I wrote it in the present tense. It was pure stream of consciousness in a three-hour block on a Saturday morning. It was FUN! It was DOABLE. It felt AUTHENTIC. It incorporated family, life, some business, my yearning to be an '*artist*' in the creative, Julia Cameron sense (writing, thinking, speaking and training/coaching social entrepreneurs and For Impact leaders).

Just did it again on this last birthday. Amazing how much of this stuff came about.

**WRITE IT DOWN. IT WILL HAPPEN.**

## **A 90-DAY FOCUS**

It's nice to have a 1,000-Day Plan. It's great to have a 90-Day Focus!

It's the proverbial BOTH/AND. It's about the **VISION** ... and the **FOCUS**!

Do your 1,000-DAY PLANS ... and then EXECUTE/ACT with a 90-DAY FOCUS!

## **1,000-DAY PLAN**

If you're really, really, really into this concept, you should do:

1. A 'BLUE' 1,000-Day Plan around your Impact/Vision/BHAG's ...
2. A 'RED' 1,000-Day Plan around your Strategy/Talent/ Reorganization ...
3. And, a 'GREEN' 1,000-Day Fund The Vision Plan.

**Special Note:** All of these require you to DO THE MATH.

## **90-DAY FOCUS**

FOCUS on the SPECIFIC ACTION you can take over the next 90 DAYS. What will you get done in these next 3 MONTHS? The next QUARTER?

If you string 11 great 'Quarters' together (which also happens to be **33** months!) ... you'll be amazed at what you can accomplish.

A couple of quick notes:

- You can ADJUST your 90 Day/Quarterly Plan every 30 days.
- You need to MEASURE your progress on a consistent basis.
- You need to look at both ACTIVITY and PRODUCTIVITY.

**1,000-DAY ACTION PLAN**  
**QUARTERLY BENCHMARKS**  
**(3 BIG GOALS PER QUARTER)**

<b>Q1</b>  1.  2.  3.	<b>Q2</b>  1.  2.  3.	<b>Q3</b>  1.  2.  3.
<b>Q4</b>  1.  2.  3.	<b>Q5</b>  1.  2.  3.	<b>Q6</b>  1.  2.  3.
<b>Q7</b>  1.  2.  3.	<b>Q8</b>  1.  2.  3.	<b>Q9</b>  1.  2.  3.
<b>Q10</b>  1.  2.  3.	<b>Q11</b>  1.  2.  3.	<b>CELEBRATE!!!</b>

***“WHAT GETS MEASURED.... GETS DONE.”***