



# Book Win

## The Key Principles to Take Your Business from Ordinary to Extraordinary

Frank I. Luntz  
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## Recommendation

To learn how winners win, ask them. Political consultant and Fox News analyst Frank I. Luntz interviewed extraordinary winners, including many leaders from *Forbes* 400 and *Fortune* 500 companies. Luntz distills his discoveries down to nine basic principles that he calls “nine Ps of winning.” The politicians who hire Luntz’s consulting company, The Word Doctors, consider him a master propagandist. In his own words, “It’s not what you say, it’s what people hear.” Luntz is a proven communicator, and *BooksInShort* finds that his nine rules for winners can help businesspeople plan their communications to emerge victorious in today’s marketplace.

## Take-Aways

- Winners apply the “nine Ps of winning” to always come out ahead.
- Be people-centered: Care about people and what is important to them.
- Break paradigms: Think in revolutionary ways to achieve real breakthroughs.
- Prioritize: Focus and work on what is most vital.
- Seek perfection: Strive to do everything the right way every time.
- Create partnerships: Align with worthy allies.
- Be passionate: Embrace intensity in all you do.
- Persuade: Go beyond mere communication to change people’s minds and emotions.
- Persist: Never quit until you have achieved your goals.
- Be principled: Take responsibility for your actions.

## Summary

### Ready to Grab the Brass Ring?

Winning demands special abilities. You must understand the human side of each situation and have the right chemistry to connect to people spontaneously. You need to know which questions matter and when to bring them up. You must create something new and have the vision to see solutions to life’s challenges. You should prioritize, accomplish more in a better way, persuade with power and move ahead when everyone else retreats. Be curious and passionate and love life. Trust in good fortune. And be willing to fail, pick yourself up and try again.

“It’s not what you say, it’s what people hear.”

Winners are not like other people. As Tom Harrison, chairman and CEO of Diversified Agency Services, puts it, winners concentrate on their long-range goals, not on the roadblocks in front of them. Good is never enough; only extraordinary will do. Winners don't make excuses. They are communicators who understand that the first words people speak are the most vital. A poor opening for your presentation – no matter what the format – means no one will be paying attention by the time you're done.

“How badly do you want to win?”

To win, follow these guidelines, the “nine Ps of winning”:

## 1. “People-Centeredness”

Few leaders understand people and their feelings better than former US President Bill Clinton. In 1992, during Clinton's first presidential campaign, AIDS activist Bob Rafsky complained to him that the US government had been neglecting the AIDS issue. Clinton responded: “I feel your pain.” By communicating in this manner during his campaign, Clinton signaled to Rafsky and all other Americans that he was empathetic about their concerns. You cannot be a winner if you are not “people-centered.”

“Winners have in common that they all hate to lose.”

If you are people-centered, your answers to at least four of these questions should be in the affirmative:

- **“Do you look others right in the eyes?”** – This shows respect. Attentiveness to others helps uncover the emotions that motivate them.
- **“Do you repeatedly ask ‘why’?”** – Conversation provides opportunities to discover what makes others tick.
- **“Do you analyze what you can gain from each interaction?”** – Align what you have to offer with people's needs.
- **“Do you actively look to improve products, results or situations?”** – People-centered individuals love to solve problems and develop solutions.
- **“Do you apply your experiences?”** – Your track record provides “your working capital for winning.” Leverage your experiential capital productively.

## 2. “Paradigm Breaking”

In the 16th century, Nicolaus Copernicus claimed in his book *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres* that the Earth and the other planets revolve around the sun. Prior to Copernicus, people believed that the Earth was the center of the universe, and that the sun traveled around it. Copernicus demonstrated otherwise, and everyone began to think differently about the world and the universe. This represented a paradigm shift, a paradigm being a collection of “assumptions, concepts, values and practices” that form reality for those who share them.

“The same people who fail to effectively motivate their employees are...the same people who fail to communicate effectively to their customers.”

In 1954, milkshake-mixer salesman Ray Kroc convinced the McDonald brothers, owners of a highly successful Southern California hamburger shop, to hire him as their agent for the expansion of their restaurant operation. The result: McDonald's hamburger outlets and the global fast-food industry, another notable paradigm shift. Winners like Kroc don't just outperform other people, they radically change how things get done. To enact major change in the way people relate to the world, winners throw out their established notions and think in new ways. Avon CEO Andrea Jung believes you should imagine that you have been fired, and then return to work the next day as if it were your first day at a new firm. What problems would you see? What radical solutions would you suggest?

## 3. “Prioritization”

During 2008 and 2009, a major health care debate took place across the US. Although public support for a new health care program was not overwhelming (37%-42% approval), President Barack Obama's administration made that reform a priority. The White House argued that such reform was the morally responsible thing to do and was needed for deficit reduction. The Democrats pushed health care reform through the Congress. It became law, though polls indicated that people were more worried about jobs. The Democrats' priorities did not align with those of most Americans.

“Winners recognize that even when they aren't physically selling a product, they are always selling themselves.”

Don't make this mistake with your business. Make sure you know what your customers care about, and craft your communications accordingly. Hone a unique concept that differentiates your company. Once you have established this core concept, deliver “an individualized, personalized, humanized message.” Focus initially on what really counts, and then move on to other priorities.

## 4. “Perfection”

Cars today are better than vehicles from years past. For example, over the two decades leading up through 2009, miles-per-gallon (MPG) averages for US passenger vehicles went from 22.6 to 32.6 MPG. Japan's Toyota Prius, which uses both gasoline and electricity, averages 50 MPG. Many new cars have built-in docks for MP3 players. Navigation systems are now standard on a lot of new models. GM, for example, offers OnStar, a turn-by-turn navigation system.

“What you choose to leave out of your communication is just as important as what you chose to include.”

New cars offer more attractive features because of competition. In the car industry, you stay ahead of your competitors by building the perfect vehicle. Certainly, Lexus, with its “relentless pursuit of perfection” slogan, strives to achieve this goal. Through April 2010, Lexus was the United States' best-selling luxury vehicle every year for 10 years. Winners refuse to settle for good or even great. Perfection is the only standard that counts.

## 5. “Partnership”

Michael Jordan was the National Basketball Association's most dominant player of his era. Yet Jordan could not win games by himself. He needed his teammates, his coaches and his support staff. Winners know they must partner with others. In 1984, Nike teamed up with Jordan, making him their primary celebrity athlete endorser. This partnership paid off for Nike, which went on to sell tens of millions of shoes.

“Paradigm-breaking winners [have the] ability to affect people on an individual, one-to-one basis – regardless of whether they’ve met you or know you exist.”

By 1986, Jordan wanted to cancel his contract. His signature shoe, the Air Jordan, was not selling. Not wanting to lose Jordan, Nike invited him to help redesign the shoe. Thanks to this renewed partnership, Air Jordans became immensely popular. Even today, long after Jordan's retirement from the NBA, Air Jordans still sell, despite their lofty retail price of \$170 or more. Winners need partners. Of course, the chemistry must be right for a partnership to succeed.

## **6. “Passion”**

When it comes to retail, Walmart is a big, big winner. It sells everything cheaply. Its profits and prices are terrific, but the company lacks passion. Walmart stores are standardized, giant, soulless warehouses filled with retail products. Costco is different. Jim Sinegal, Costco's co-founder and CEO, visits many of the retail giant's 400 stores every year. So, at any Costco, you may see a 74-year-old man walking purposefully through the aisles, monitoring the inventory, conferring with employees, checking everything out himself. Costco's CEO never forgets the details.

“You have to own the problem if you're going to fix the problem.”

Sinegal is passionate about Costco and its low pricing. He is always looking to sell for less than his rivals, he explains, “so that the competitors eventually say...‘these guys are crazy. We'll compete somewhere else’.” Sinegal explains that most retail firms want to increase prices. Costco wants to do the opposite. Sinegal wants to lower prices and will accept a lower per-item profit in order to gain customer loyalty and greater overall sales. Sinegal is passionate regarding pricing and its strategies. Three characteristics distinguish winners: emotion, vision and commitment. You can't win without them.

## **7. “Persuasion”**

Renowned Las Vegas hotelier Steve Wynn learned about persuasion from his father, a bingo hall owner. From the age of 16, he worked with his father, calling out the games. “My father...taught me how to speak to a thousand people and how to have rhythm in my voice.” People play bingo rhythmically, he added, and calling the numbers without tempo would disrupt their game and pleasure. His father also taught him the most effective way to emphasize a message: “Leave space” (silence) around the words you want to showcase.

“Persuasion requires disciplined persistence. It never, ever happens in a sentence, or a sound-bite, or a flip of the switch. It requires repetition.”

Wynn applied the same rules to hotel design. Space is necessary for “something to be pretty and appreciated.” Wynn follows three rules for spoken and visual persuasion:

1. Silence communicates more than noise.
2. Rhythmic is better than random.
3. Open spaces let people see more than cluttered spaces do.

“Making passion contagious requires translating your emotion, your vision and your commitment into a language [others] understand and want to hear.”

Winners don't focus on communication, per se. They persuade and motivate. They seek disciples, not supporters. To persuade others, you must understand their points of view, experiences, values, opinions, beliefs, cultures, traditions and hot buttons.

## **8. “Persistence”**

Without persistence, you cannot win. Jimmy Connors, the number-one-ranked tennis player for five years in a row, provides a great role model for persistence. Connors won 109 tournaments, more than any other male tennis player. He played at a world-class level into his late thirties. “I played crazy, and that's the only way I knew to play,” said Connors. “I wasn't worried about making friends. Winning was the only thing that mattered.” Connors's devotion to winning also included a commitment to practice and fitness. He was willing to do the hard, boring work that is the definition of persistence.

“Every individual will be held accountable for the personal standards they have set for themselves.”

NBA superstar Larry Bird was every bit as persistent as Connors. He was famous for his work ethic and for constantly practicing to be the best player in the game. At the end of practice, Bird always remained in the gym as his teammates headed for the locker room. There, Bird would work on his free throws. “You're at 78% or 79%,” he said. “Why not shoot 80%?”

“The creative component is just as important as the technical particulars.”

Bird focused on improving throughout his career. He refused to stand still or go backward. It is not difficult to learn how to do something. You can easily find out what techniques or methods are most effective. But this knowledge isn't sufficient. Knowing is not doing. Hard work and persistence make the difference.

## **9. “Principled Action”**

If you follow the above axioms in an unprincipled way, you will be a loser, not a winner. Winning is not putting more points on the board. It is accepting responsibility for every action you take and doing what's right.

“How you get there is just as important as where you end up.”

When it comes to living your principles on a daily basis, these words count more than any others:

- **“Accountability”** – People want business leaders and companies to hold themselves responsible for their actions. Accountability is the quality lacking in business today.
- **“Strict standards”** – Without standards, companies are lost.
- **“Corporate culture”** – This distinguishes your business and operating principles.
- **“Moral compass”** – Know right from wrong, and live what you know.
- **“Social responsibility”** – Treat employees with respect, be accountable to your customers and do good works for your community.
- **“Objective and unbiased”** – Learn, understand and overcome your own prejudices.
- **“Uncompromising integrity”** – Situational integrity is a contradiction in terms.
- **“The simple truth”** – Don’t spin the truth. Serve it up unvarnished.
- **“Chief ethics/ethical officer”** – Create this position in your firm and give it power.
- **“Say what you mean and mean what you say”** – Warren Buffett, the plainspoken investment genius, is an excellent model.

## About the Author

**Dr. Frank I. Luntz** is a Fox News commentator and the author of *Words That Work*.

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