

# HITTING YOUR STRIDE

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

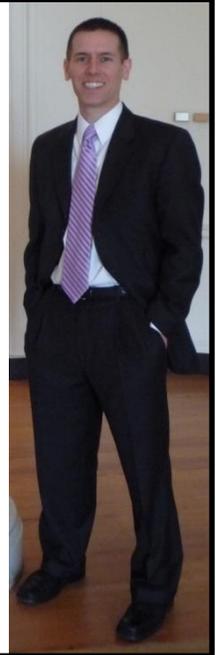
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People generally don't like to talk about failure. Acknowledging that we didn't attain a hoped for outcome—without rationalizing that it's not a big deal—can be tough. However, as Michael Jordan noted in [a commercial](#) years ago, "I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."

With that in mind, I recently made a list of my biggest professional and personal failures—going back more than two decades and ranging from work to athletics to school to relationships. The list keeps me humble, helps me remain patient when those around me make mistakes, and gives me confidence. The confidence comes from seeing that my many failures have not weighed me down. Instead, they have been valuable learning experiences, and in the process of overcoming them I have built mental and emotional resilience and strength.

Jim Collins implores leaders to confront "[the brutal facts](#)" in order to improve their organizations. Similarly, I challenge you to confront past shortcomings as a step toward becoming the professional and person you want to be.

Stride On,  
Michael



## STAYING IN FRONT

*"In reality, knowledge is a very dynamic universe—and what is most valuable is not the body of knowledge, but the leading edge of it."*

*- Bill James, baseball historian & statistician*

### Books to Read This Quarter

[\*Creativity, Inc.: Overcoming the Forces That Stand in the Way of True Inspiration\*](#)

- Ed Catmull

[\*Plato at the Googleplex: Why Philosophy Won't Go Away\*](#)

- Rebecca Goldstein

### Articles to Read This Quarter

[Get Familiar with Big Data Now—or Face 'Permanent Pink Slip'](#)

- Nikki Waller (*Wall Street Journal*)

[How to Make Yourself Work When You Just Don't Want To](#)

- Heidi Grant Halvorson (*Harvard Business Review*)

[The Confidence Gap](#)

- Katty Kay & Claire Shipman (*The Atlantic*)

*Hitting Your Stride* is written and distributed by Michael Salmonowicz

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## CATCHING UP

*Being on the leading edge of knowledge is important, but it is vital to be familiar with thinkers and ideas from past years as well. This will help you to be more innovative when creating and problem-solving, and also can prevent older colleagues from patronizing you about your age or inexperience.*

### **Books to Read This Quarter**

#### [Great by Choice](#)

- Jim Collins & Morten Hansen

#### [Intelligence and How to Get It: Why Schools and Cultures Count](#)

- Richard Nisbett

### **Articles to Read This Quarter**

#### [Leonardo da Vinci's Resume](#)

- Marc Cenedella (*TheLadders*)

#### [Pearls before Breakfast](#)

- Gene Weingarten (*Washington Post*)

## REFLECTING

*“The single biggest danger in business and life, other than outright failure, is to be successful without being resolutely clear about why you are successful in the first place.”*  
- Robert Burgelman, Stanford University business professor

While networking is a vital part of professional life, many people are intimidated by it and therefore shy away from opportunities to make connections with others. But in my experience, successful networking can be simple and devoid of stress (and even enjoyable!) once you've addressed two things: confidence and planning. I'll cover confidence here, and planning in the next issue.

Since networking involves the exchange of resources, contacts, ideas, and feedback, you must feel confident that you have something to offer others. Reflecting on your skills and accomplishments, using the questions below, can help. Some people have trouble understanding how impressive or interesting they might appear to another professional, so you may want to do one reflection session on your own and a second with a friend or colleague who can serve as a thought partner.

- 1) What about my skills or accomplishments would others find special, interesting, or unique?
- 2) What resources, contacts, ideas, and feedback can I offer others?
- 3) How can I communicate to others what I have to offer in a genuine and effective manner?

## WEBSITE TO KNOW

Khan Academy ([www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org))

About: Free instruction in a variety of subjects (algebra I, computer programming, economics, art history, the GMAT & MCAT—and many, many more) through narrated videos.

Usefulness: Khan Academy's thousands of micro lessons are targeted—e.g., one teaches price elasticity of demand, while another covers total revenue and elasticity—so you can address your specific learning need without wasting time on non-essential material.

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## **PERSONAL PROFESSIONAL PRESERVATION (aka NOT BEING OVERLY INTERESTING)**

This quarter I'm combining two sections that normally grace this page into one that is particularly important for young professionals. First, some context... Recently, my mom was online and found a picture of my 21-year-old cousin from his high school graduation a few years ago. At the bottom was this text: "I'm one of the baddest motherf\*\*\*ers of all time" (the expletive was written in full). She asked me whether he typed that on the picture himself, or if one of his friends could have done it. I don't know, but in either case he is responsible for it. The image shows up immediately upon searching for his name, and one day a potential employer likely will see it and won't ask for an explanation. That person simply will move on to the next candidate. My cousin's carelessness here, and on his Twitter page—which is littered with inappropriate tweets and re-tweets, all of which can be seen by anyone—spurred me to write this.

So, how can you ensure your reputation is intact online? Follow these steps:

- 1) Head to [google.com](http://google.com) and search for your name. If you have a common name, add a college or employer name to narrow the search (e.g., Sam Smith Michigan State).
- 2) Search for your name again, but put it in quotation marks (this limits the search to pages where the phrase shows up exactly as you typed it). If you have a common name, add a college or employer name to narrow the search (e.g., "Sam Smith" "Michigan State").
- 3) If you used to go by a different first or last name (e.g., in college you went by Jim, but now you go by James), be sure to search for that as well.
- 4) For each search, check the Web, News, Images, and Videos tabs.
- 5) Determine the source of anything that doesn't portray you positively. If it's from your own Facebook page, blog, etc., remove it immediately. If it's from a page a friend controls, untag yourself from the picture/post and/or ask that person to remove it.
- 6) If you find information about yourself that is false or misleading, seriously damaging, and not easily removed, use a service like [reputation.com](http://reputation.com) to clean it up.
- 7) If you have a public Twitter account, review your tweets and make sure you'd be okay with a potential employer reading every single one of them.

### **DID YOU KNOW...**

When the University of Illinois welcomes 6,000+ freshmen to campus in a few weeks, [600 \(10%\) of them will be from China](#). And across the country, the number of international college students continues to rise—with [nearly 820,000 enrolled](#) during the 12-13 school year. This is yet another reminder that higher education and the job market are impacted greatly by global competition.

### **WORDS ON WHICH TO RUMINATE**

"Be deliberate. Don't let things happen to you. Controlling your time is an essential characteristic no matter what you do."

- Steve Ballmer, former CEO of Microsoft