

WINNING

by [Steve Brown](#)

Remember back to when you were a child for a moment. Think about all of the fun you had playing sports and occasionally getting a trophy when your team won some event. Unfortunately for us all, trophies aren't usually handed out in banking. Instead, bankers must look inside themselves to determine what key attributes, qualities and characteristics they must possess to consider themselves successful. Beyond ROE and profitability, we thought bankers might want a checklist to assist them in this endeavor. Bankers should check all that apply: ☐ I have a desire and drive to succeed and cannot wait to put my ideas into action each day. ☐ I have a positive mental attitude and do not believe in failure. ☐ I use common sense in making judgments and considering issues. I focus on trying to understand complex issues by simplifying them into their core and most critical components. ☐ I believe in my ability and have strong self confidence. I am willing to take risks, make difficult decisions and explore new things. ☐ I am committed to my bank, tenacious and hardworking. I complete the jobs I start and endeavor to put forth 100% effort in anything I begin. ☐ I am persistent. I face change head on and remain focused on success. Nothing is ever as straightforward as it seems, and I continually adapt, improvise and overcome. ☐ I am self motivated. Accolades are appreciated, but I will continue to drive my business forward whether or not others stand and applaud. I am proactive, set goals and will make the extra effort to achieve them. ☐ I am open to and embrace creativity. I admit I do not know everything and refuse to be complacent. I believe finding new solutions to old problems, examining new ideas and being open to discussion are critical to success. ☐ I am a leader. I motivate those I work with and help them to improve. I focus on improving the team, rather than taking credit for accomplishments. ☐ I have a positive mental attitude not only in my business, but also my life. I look forward in life and focus on opportunities rather than obstacles. ☐ I am reliable. When I give my word I will do something, I stand by that word so others can count on me. ☐ I am passionate about what I do. Each day brings a new set of opportunities that it is enjoyable to relentlessly pursue. ☐ I have committed my goals to paper in order to concretely measure my success along the way. I have a vision, I know where I am going and I believe I have the skills to succeed. SCORING: A score of 10-13 is tops. Give yourself an A if you fell into this category. The best thing you can do is to keep doing what you are doing. A score of 7-10 is good, but has room to improve. This group possesses many of the key qualities required to have a successful bank, but additional training or focus could be added to move into the top echelon. If you ended up in this group, give yourself a grade of B. A score of 4-7 is still decent, but those scoring in this group should strive to improve in order to truly operate at the highest possible personal level. This group should give itself a grade of C, with room to improve. For those scoring below 4, it is time to work on a New Year's resolution. Some of the passion may have eroded and perhaps introspection is required. Training and thoughtful consideration would also probably help. While we are not going to assign a letter grade to this group, we suggest those who scored here focus on 5 key attributes listed above for the upcoming year. Independent bankers have one of the most difficult and demanding jobs around (no matter how you scored). As such, we wish you the best of holidays and success in the upcoming year and hope this helped in some small way.

BANK NEWS

M&A

Western Alliance Bancorp (\$4.1B, NV) will acquire the holding company of First Independent Bank of Nevada (\$402mm, NV) for an undisclosed sum. Western Alliance also indicated it would sell 25% of its investment portfolio in an effort to boost liquidity, interest margin and future earnings.

M&A

Banner Corporation (\$3.5B, WA) will acquire the parent company of Islanders Bank (\$151mm, WA) for about \$40.8mm, or 2.5x book.

M&A

A study of payouts for CEOs at a group of large companies that were recently acquired, finds 81% received a cash payment for losing their job, 79% got accelerated options for sticking around, 68% were paid more money to cover the taxes on their equity payout and 63% got cash payments equal to at least 3x annual pay.

Construction

Given a 30% drop in housing starts and since construction accounts for 75% of demand for lumber, softness in the industry is accelerating. Prices for lumber have fallen about 25% over the past 12 months.

Email

A new study by the Stern School of Business, finds slightly less than 50% of people understand the tone or intent of any given email.

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