

# Share Your Secrets to Achieve Your Goals

*by David Berky, president of Simple Joe, Inc*

A friend of mine was talking to a friend of his, who was a successful businessman. This businessman had started and sold several companies and made millions. As they were talking about new business ideas, this businessman commented that he often has people approach him with their ideas.

But the funny thing was that many of the people who approached him wouldn't tell him their idea or they wanted him to sign a "non-disclosure" agreement. The millionaire businessman laughed and said he could always tell that someone was going to fail when they were afraid of someone else stealing their idea.

This made me wonder. First of all, why would anyone not want to run a business idea by a successful millionaire businessman and take advantage of any advice he would have to offer? I would think that most people with an idea would love to have the chance to hear his opinion. Who knows? He may even be interested enough to help you.

Then I wondered at what he said about people who are afraid to share their ideas being doomed to failure. How could this be? Wouldn't keeping your idea a secret until the last minute be the best way to start a new revolutionary business or create a new product from your invention?

But if you talk to people who have actually created a new business or product you may find that there is much more involved than just the "lone inventor" with his secret, crack-pot idea.

Very seldom is a new business or a new product developed in secret. The idea may be held to a close, chosen few. But it almost always takes a group of people working together to give birth to their idea.

I believe Napoleon Hill wrote about the idea of the "master-mind" group as a method for success in his book *Think and Grow Rich*. The basic concept being this: a select group of people focused on a goal and bringing to the effort unique and needed skills are much more likely to succeed than the lone genius.

We also often hear the word "synergy" applied to two or more people or groups that are working together toward a common goal.

These techniques have been proven successful time and time again. But they still involve some degree of secrecy. There may be "development agreements" between the parties, and even "confidentiality agreements", which are fine and sometimes even needed.

But what about the idea of telling everyone you meet or have occasion to talk with about your idea? Almost every day we are greeted with the phrase "What's new?" What do you answer? "Nothing." "Same ol' - same ol'." Or some other trite and vague comeback!

What if you said, "I've got this great idea that will revolutionize my industry! Have you got a minute for me to run it by you?" That would be a much more interesting conversation for both people. But are you risking "letting the cat out of the bag?" Are you jeopardizing your personal success by sharing your "secret" with someone else?

I would say, "No." Now, obviously, if you are talking to your direct competitor you probably don't want to tell them your latest idea for a revolutionary new product. But what about all the other people you come in contact with? Why not tell them?

Well, that's not a fair question. As it is, most people would ask, "Why tell them your secret?"

So I had better answer that question instead.

I think that many people come up with great ideas, but keep them so secret that they never amount to anything. Once these little seeds of genius have germinated, they need the light of day to grow and develop. Often, as said before, you need other people's help to make your idea become reality.

You may need an accountant, a production manager, a marketer or salesperson. And you probably need their thoughts, opinions and advice in the planning phases, not just when you are ready to roll out your product to an eager public. (Besides, how is the public going to even know about your product without marketing?)

Many eager entrepreneurs and inventors decide to "cut out the middle men" and try to do it all themselves. Can you think of any examples of products or businesses that started this way? Probably not. Why? Because they ultimately were not successful.

Have you ever heard the sayings: "Don't practice another man's profession" or "Jack of all trades, master of none"? What these mean is that we each can have one or more specialties where we are very competent. But if we venture into other areas, we may not be as proficient. In business this simply means that you can't create a large, successful business by yourself. You will need the talents and skills of others.

But aside from the possibility of sharing your idea with someone else and having them jump on board or become part of your "master-mind" group, there is also the concept of committing yourself to your idea by verbalizing it to someone else.

By telling someone else your idea, even if you aren't trying to recruit that person into your "master-mind" group, you are putting yourself "out on a limb," so to speak. You are, in essence, making a statement of your intentions. You are publicly sharing your goal.

If you meet that person a week, month or year later, they may ask you, "What ever happened to that idea you told me about?" "What did you do about it?" "Did you try it?" "Did it work out?" "Why not?"

By telling someone your idea or goal, you have done two things. First, you have extended yourself to make that verbal commitment to your idea. Second, you have set yourself up for possible ridicule if you fail.

Of the two things you just did, the first is the most important, but the second seems to be the one that deters many people from sharing their "secret". Sure they may tell you that they are closely guarding their secret so that it isn't stolen and accomplished without them. But really I think they are afraid of committing themselves to their idea.

My friend's millionaire businessman was of the opinion that anyone who was unafraid of sharing his/her "secret" was probably someone who was driven and excited enough to actually accomplish that goal or bring that idea into reality. So sharing the secret was not a risk, but an additional sign of commitment to that goal and determination to see that idea to fruition.

So the next time someone tells you "I have a great idea, but it's a 'secret'", take note and check later to see if that person ever followed through. Chances are, probably not. And if you have a "secret", maybe you should consider spreading it around, because it seems to me that the more you share your secret, the more likely you are to accomplish your goal.

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David Berky is president of Simple Joe, Inc., the non-secretive software company whose accomplished goal is to provide easy-to-use PC software for personal finance, organization and productivity. Simple Joe's Event Tracker can help you easily keep on top of deadlines, appointments and meetings. Visit <http://www.simplejoe.com/eventtracker> for more information