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Shoot To Win Big In 2011

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New year, new energy. Resolve to get what you want in 2011. Mindsets to pump up your work life:

- **Make 'em laugh.** "Versatility" author Francie Dalton says hilarity delivers dividends for executives.

"If they have humor, they become approachable," she told IBD. "People are less afraid to make a mistake. People are less defensive. People are — fasten your seat belts — more willing to tell you the truth."

Comedy also inspires confidence. If you can chuckle about something, you can deal with it.

"What you can discern in me is a resilience of my own and an ability perhaps to inspire resilience in others," Dalton said.

- **Bend a little.** Dalton recommends "adapt-itude" — changing how you deal with certain individuals rather than complaining that it's impossible to deal with them.

"Most of our nightmares are on two legs," Dalton said. "You can go to war or you can have an attitude about adapting."

Workers bristle against bowing to others' quirks because it feels like a weakness. Reframe it as a beat-'em-at-their-own-game strength.

"If you're an elitist, make it a head game," Dalton said. "If we change our attitude about adapting, we can recognize it as a strategy that enables and enhances success in every facet of life."

- **Seize the day.** Struggling to get a leg up in a big corporation? Instead, "get your foot in the water with entrepreneurship."

That's the advice of Scott Gerber, author of "Never Get a 'Real' Job."

Today's career landscape favors self-starters.

"The fact is, we're in the middle of a paradigm shift," Gerber said. "We need to create a job to keep a job."

- **Work your niche.** Gerber tells aspiring bootstrappers not to wait for a groundbreaking inspiration. Instead, focus on something that's executable.

"What can you do with your own two hands?" Gerber said. "Do one thing and sell that with absolute precision."

- **Check your expectations.** Generation Y-ers tend to aim for startup fame a la Facebook. "But they want to skip all the steps to get to that point," Gerber said.

Forget about making headlines; resolve to work gradually toward success.

"Think about making a living, not making a million," Gerber said. "You have to build with cash flow, not ego."

- **Grab a partner.** Where business newbies shine is their knack for collaborating. "We grew up on soccer teams," Gerber said.

- **Stop saying yes.** Recessionary conditions pressured too many business owners into making concessions to seal a deal. So says negotiation trainer Jim Camp.

He argues that agreeing to deals that give up profit margin can be a company's downfall.

As author of "Start With No," Camp advises doing just that.

"The beauty of no is that it maintains the status quo," he said. "You can take a step back and really take a look at (the situation) and load up the intellectual database."

- **Build an airtight case.** To avoid the conciliation position, ask yourself: "What is the problem (customers) want to solve?" Camp said.

Tailor your proposal to serve that need without giving anything away. Then sell it, in detail.

"Our job is to create the vision that helps (customers) work through the decision process," Camp said.

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