

## "Own Your Strategy for Success"

An interview with Frank Greene, to be included in the new book, "Be Heard and Be Trusted" (2nd Edition), © 2008 by Tom Marcoux.

Tom Marcoux: What does it mean to say "Own Your Strategy for Success"?

Frank Greene: This means being personally responsible for your success. Many people have this desire, but often do not have the knowledge tools for making it happen. We have developed a leadership model that is being used by people all over the country to take charge of their lives and "Own Their Success". This leadership model called the VRE model is based on the way successful people operate as leaders in their lives or with others in groups or in large organizations.

All successful leaders meet their challenges by starting with a clear **vision** that creates values for others, they get everyone working together through positive **relationships**, and they **execute** at a very high level by making smart decisions. For the last two years we have been helping people learn how to better succeed by using the **VRE leadership** concepts. **V-vision R-relationships E-execute**

Tom Marcoux: Frank, at one point we were talking about how your VRE leadership concepts were used by a team of women entrepreneurs to develop a strategy that helped them gain funding. Would you tell me about how VRE leadership worked in this case?

Frank Greene: Using the VRE leadership concepts they were able to lay out all the elements of success strategy. They clarified and focused the company vision, they figured who were the right people they needed to have working relationships with who could help them execute their vision. They clarified what to expect from the key people in terms of results to expect and what was needed to get those results. In other words VRE gave them a framework to deconstruct and then reconstruct their strategy into one they are executing.

Tom: What is strategy?

Frank: The strategy is what gets everyone working together to meet a common goal. A strategy has the following elements and describes the leadership challenge and how this creates an opportunity, the factors that need to be addressed in order to be successful, the vision, the

relationship rules, and the practices for execution. Many times this is documented in what are called strategic plans. Successful execution of complex strategies means that many people have to take on leadership roles. We use the VRE leadership model to create a **one-page strategy** document. So the strategy can be referred everyday!

Tom: So how did the VRE leadership strategy help the team of women entrepreneurs?

Frank: They needed to submit a proposal for funding, but they were struggling in how to describe their business -- as a matter of fact, how to think about their business. I went through this VRE process with them, starting with creating a vision statement for the business. Then, they looked at themselves - what was their passion? What was driving them to proceed with this business? I helped them develop a strong positive description of why they were building the business. They talked about the relationships with their customers and how they were creating value for their customers.

Another important part of the VRE leadership strategy is how they were creating value for their customers and the people they work with. They used the VRE structure, and they did a great job of figuring that out how to address those points. Then they put together what they had already executed and how they would use the money to help them move their business forward. They became winners of the competition to gain money to help them with their business.

Tom: That's terrific! And now what do you think is critical that new entrepreneurs might miss?

Frank: I have given VRE leadership workshops around the country and what most entrepreneurs tell me is that they do not read the traditional leadership books that are 200 to 300 pages long. What entrepreneurs are looking for is help in developing some practical leadership skills so they can use to get their work done right now. The VRE leadership model gives a way to immediately understand your leadership strengths. By the way I have found that **every one** has leadership skills. By understanding the leadership process they have already used in their lives they can now build on that knowledge. Building on existing knowledge is why we get the dramatic leadership learning in our workshops, based on the comments from attendees.

Tom: Yes! I see that under "execution" you emphasize Daily Leadership Practices. Would you give me an example of that?

Frank: Sure. People who are successful at business stay absolutely focused on customer success. A daily focus on customer success was a leadership imperative for me as I developed two software companies that had a average growth rate of about 50% per year for over 10 years while being profitable every quarter.

Tom: Great! Now, if you were to give the one most important piece of advice to a rising entrepreneur, what would that be?

Frank: That's like saying, "I need to bake a cake. What is the one most important ingredient to bake a cake?"

Tom (smiling): Yes.

Frank: Here is something that I personally use. I'll sum up with talking about the Serenity Prayer. [The Serenity Prayer: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference."  
-- Reinhold Niebuhr]

Anyone who is starting a new challenge in life and certainly being an entrepreneur is that. You need courage. It takes wisdom to know how to apply your courage so that you are not fool hardy. That's another reason why you need daily leadership practices. Because it through practice and learning that you get smarter and the more your wisdom base grows. It is through your wisdom that you will have the knowledge skills to "Own Your Strategy for Success".

Tom: How can a person get more information about the VRE leadership model.

Frank: We have VRE based leadership books and workbooks and we offer workshops. For more information go to [www.go-positive.com](http://www.go-positive.com)

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-- Dr. Frank Greene, a highly accomplished Silicon Valley venture capitalist, operating business executive, and technologist with four decades of experience. He holds a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering and has been in private venture capital since 1986. In 1993, he started New Vista Capital to assist start-up companies in business planning and raising capital. Subsequently, he served as founding General Partner of the New Vista Capital Funds I & II. From 1971 to 1989, Dr. Greene was the founding CEO of two information technology companies, Technology Development Corp. (went public in 1985) & ZeroOne Systems (sold to Sterling Software). He took two companies through Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) and was instrumental in the merger or acquisition of several more. Prior to 1971, Dr. Greene developed high-speed semiconductor computer memory systems as a member of the technical staff at Fairchild Semiconductor R & D Labs, and participated in the development of high-performance computers as an electronics officer in the U.S. Air Force. Moreover, he has taught electrical engineering & computer science courses at Stanford University, Santa Clara University, Howard University, American University, and Washington University in St. Louis, MO. Dr. Greene is currently a Member of the Board of Reach Communications & Compliance Coach. He is a past Chairman of the American Musical Theatre of San Jose, former Board Member of the National Conference of Community & Justice, and Emeritus Member of the Board of Trustees of Santa Clara University. [www.nvcap.com](http://www.nvcap.com)