

“How To Make The Inc. 500”

1. **Ask Why:** Ask the right questions to see if it's what you really want. Do you understand the sacrifices involved in order to get there? Can your market sustain that kind of growth?
2. **Make it a goal** (to be an Inc. 500 company): Set growth plans for revenue (what they track) and build an operational model that builds to those goals.
3. **Make it a game:** Include everyone; throw parties when you win.
4. **Build the machine:** Mechanize everything you can so it can scale.
5. **Know the market:** Break your market down into its constituent components and figure out how you crack into each account systematically.
6. **Be an Animal:** Embrace sales and marketing aggressively. Don't take it lightly and don't expect business to come to you. Owning the customer relationship is the key to profitability. Hire more animals.
7. **Find Rock Stars:** Surround yourself with people who play at a bigger level (advisors, employees and investors). They'll upgrade your game and help you scale effectively. Many times the only thing between you and the next inflection point is a mental block.
8. **Build Character:** Let the tough stuff make you stronger, not weaker. Find your power place.
9. **Seek inspiration:** Find people who do great things and have them juice you up.
10. **Go Big:** Surprise yourself and do bigger things than you thought were possible.
11. **Get Lean:** Say no to stupid stuff (and stupid people) that will bog you down.
12. **Get Replaced:** If necessary, replace yourself with someone who can do it better. Do what's best for the company.
13. **Be strategic:** Consider partnerships and/or other paths to market that will get you past that inflection point.
14. **Develop Thick Skin:** It's going to get personal, and it's going to get tough. Find a way to pull on your emotions when you need them for passion, but don't let them get the best of you when things are difficult.
15. **Have fun:** Laugh at yourself and the wild-eyed silliness that is entrepreneurship.