



## Facilitator — April/May 2011



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### Sharpen Your Tools

*Vernice Armour*

#### No Need for a Runway

In your life and career, take off from where you are

I went from a beat cop to a combat pilot in three years.

Within 12 months, I found myself flying over the deserts of Iraq supporting the men and women on the ground.

After serving two tours overseas, I had (to my surprise) become America's first African-American female combat pilot. When I returned home, so many people wanted to know how I did it. That's when I realized how many people truly wanted to create breakthroughs in their lives; they just didn't know how.

From my experiences, I created a seven-step process called the "Zero to Breakthrough" Success Plan. I share this message through keynotes, coaching and seminars. In this article, I want to give you a quick jump start into the process that can be implemented immediately, whether it's in a rapid-planning/ emergency situation or a more formal, structured process.

This article will help leaders, no matter where they are in the leadership chain, harness the power of a few simple but powerful steps. You'll get the boost you need to lead from the front, strengthen the skills you already possess and accomplish the mission no matter what.

The bottom line is you have to move into action from where you are. Unfortunately, many people become paralyzed in the preparation phase. Decide what you want, put your stake in the ground and execute! I call this making a commitment to the commitment.

#### Phase 1: Create Your Flight Plan

The plan is to create facilities that run smoothly and to ensure that all processes that can be automated are automated, which enables you to give a personal touch to the important relationships.

You have to know where you are and what you want in order to create the breakthrough results you are looking for. Simply envisioning your desired result is the first step. This first step is not about knowing how to get there, but having a "there" to get to.

#### Phase 2: Pre-Flight

The pre-flight phase is when you mitigate the risks in order to come up with a solid plan. We have our tools and charts that help us with our risk assessments. Let's take it a step further.

When we get criticism from someone (what I like to call "productive feedback") or another team member or supervisor rejects your plan, use that information to create a stronger plan. Address the risk factors so they are no longer risks. Now, we're ready for the takeoff and execution phases.

#### Phase 3: Take-Off

This phase takes a lot of power in the initial stages. Take a moment to imagine the space shuttle turning on its thrusters in those first seconds and the amazing force it takes to get thousands of tons off the ground. Once airborne, however, it orbits the planet, ready for the execution phase of the flight.

Whether it's getting a new facility up and running, managing a remodeling project or removing snow from the parking lots after a record-breaking blizzard, this is the time to make sure the initial energy you put into the

project pays off.

#### Phase 4: Execution

Once you get the ball rolling and all the moving parts in place, you can now focus on managing the effort. Will there be obstacles? Of course. Adversity is a given. It's how you manage adversity that matters.

Acknowledge the obstacles, but don't give them power. This is where clear and concise leadership takes place. Making decisions in the midst of combat is what I like to call it. And make no mistake; not making a decision is making a decision. Clear all obstacles, and keep moving forward.

#### Phase 5: Review, Recharge and Re-Attack

This is absolutely one of the most important phases. Phase 5 is when everything gets tied together.

Everyone likes to review their failures, and they are right to do so. As LaDonna Gatlin says, "Failure is fertilizer!" Any championship football or basketball team looks at tons of tape to review their own and their opponent's successes and failures. The importance of reviewing your success is often overlooked. But this is where the real "strategic advantage" lies.

The successes are where we unearth our best practices. Success can be duplicated, but we have to know how we succeeded before we can systematically duplicate it.

We also have to recharge: emotionally, physically and intellectually. When it comes to recharging emotionally, how much time are you taking off from work? Make sure to get away from the job and spend time with family, friends or just yourself. You can't be an effective leader unless you take time to power up and recharge. This goes for your employees, too.

Staying physically charged is also important. We need energy to get good work out of our brains. If we are tired and worn down, we're not much good for the team, and we also won't be tapping into our innovative side as much. Let's not overlook staying healthy and reasonably fit. Where are you in your personal fitness journey, and what is one thing you could change or improve to help you take it up a notch?

Finally, we must constantly recharge intellectually and add to our knowledge. No one understands that more than RFMA. That's why, at this year's annual conference, they recognized the first graduates to receive their Certified Restaurant Facility Professional (CRFP) certification.

The CRFP exam was developed by RFMA to provide restaurant facility professionals with a designation that will prove their abilities and demonstrate their commitment to achieving excellence within the restaurant industry. The exam is competency based and tests a person with three to five years of experience to define the core competencies required to follow the standards of knowledge and skills critical to the restaurant facility management industry.

#### The Big Picture

Create your flight plan; conduct your preflight; energize your takeoff; manage your execution; and make sure to review, recharge and reattack. What are you doing right, and what you can do better? Get re-charged and go out and do it again, even better than the last time!

Here's your "fly-away" for today. There are only two ways to succeed: the first time or again.

Learn more about how to create your biggest breakthrough yet. Join me on my website, Facebook page or YouTube channel by visiting [www.VerniceArmour.com](http://www.VerniceArmour.com), where you can ask me any question that will catapult you to the next level, and we can start a conversation.

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