

The "Lucky 500" is Not a Stock Car Race!

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By Robert Brents

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The "Lucky 500" is Not a Stock Car Race!
(A Lesson I Learned About The Importance of Goal-Setting)
Robert Brents, "The 80/20 Guy"

I have been a seminar and workshop leader for over fourteen years, mixing in stints as a consultant and project leader in order to stay current and be able to speak from experience.

Over those years, I have refined my message and created my niche. I'm now known as "The 80/20 Guy", and my presentations are based on what I call The Pareto Perspective.

For about the last three years, however, I had pretty much just let things happen, taking gigs when they came along, delivering a wide variety of topics. Jack of many seminars, master of one – but not focusing on delivering it consistently.

Well, folks, when you coast along like that, eventually the momentum runs down and your vehicle comes to a stop by the side of the road.

Thus, for the first time in fourteen years in business for myself, my income last year wasn't higher than the year before. In fact, it was lower.

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So at the beginning of this year I decided to consciously set goals. Specific goals. Long-term goals, because I knew that they would drive my short-term goals. And I did this in a way I had never used before.

I started with the largest end-objective, and then worked backwards to figure out what I would have to do specifically to make it happen.

I determined the financial goal I wanted to attain within the next six years. Then, based on my current speaking fee schedule, I calculated that to produce that result I would need to deliver 500 presentations.

Hence, "The Lucky 500": the 500 companies or decision-makers who will hire me to deliver my message that will help them focus resources on breakthrough objectives to improve their productivity, profitability, and creativity, and create outrageous success.

So the lesson I learned through painful experience (which I have incorporated into the Planning segment of my keynote speech, "Frank Sinatra Didn't Mover Pianos!"), start with the end in mind.

P.S. I have also discovered that using this approach – having a specific target of 500 presentations - makes it easier to take the "No's" that are an inevitable part of cold calling prospective clients. (The close ratio in my business is only about 1 out of every 20 to 30 calls.) My aversion to those "No's" was what caused me to stop making cold calls, which led to the decline of my business. Now, my attitude is that I "only" have to find 500 companies or decision-makers to reach my goal. So, if not this prospect, then possibly the next. If I get a "no" I move on to that next call immediately because the sooner I do, the sooner I will find my "Lucky 500"!

Maserati MC12 A Winner

By John Hartley

Designed to win races, the Maserati MC12 is actually sold as a road car, albeit it a very impractical one. Still what do you expect with a 620 bhp exotic car? The car looks just like the sports racing car

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that it is. To be fair, it is a real two–seater while the cars that race at Le Mans are more like single–seaters.

Only 25 MC12s were built initially, and quite a few were used for racing. Actually, when they heard about Maserati building the MC12 for the GTA championship (oops, sorry for sale as a road car, was the official line, I think) some of the other companies threatened to withdraw as they thought the presence of the MC12 on the starting grid would make a farce of the whole series.

Although the Maserati MC12, is a true exotic car, it is based on the Ferrari Enzo. The whole idea was to upgrade Maserati's image following a checkered history. The glory of the 50s, when Maserati was a regular winner of Grand Prix, got lost in the mire of an economic downturn, when the company took the wrong turn more than once.

As Ferrari and Maserati are both part of the Fiat Group, and were in fact in the same sub–group, it made sense to modify the Enzo to get Maserati back as a winner. Now, Ferrari and Maserati have been put in different sub–groups, so this sort of collaboration is not expected in the future.

V–12 from Ferrari with 622 bhp

The Maserati MC12 looks completely different from the Enzo, though,, with a long nose and very long tail. Where the Enzo is angular, the MC12 is curved. It has a carbon fiber body structure with steel sub–frames front and rear. Power comes from a 6.0 liter V–12 developing 622 bhp @ 7,500 rpm, and 480 lb ft (652 Nm) torque @ 5,500 rpm. A semi–racing engine to be sure. It is coupled to a semi–automatic six–speed sequential gearbox, developed by Ferrari in racing.

Suspension is by double wishbones, with inboard spring and damper units acting through pushrods. These are mounted horizontally as on the Enzo. The dampers have variable rates. Quite a car, but not as extreme as the Bugatti Veyron or the latest Saleen S7.

Following the racing success of the MC12, Maserati is now to build a more extreme version – the MC12 Corsa. The MC12 Corsa has a massively uprated Enzo V–12 engine giving about 750bhp. You can get this for about \$1.3 million – or £700,000 or Euros 1 million depending where you live.

But this is not a road car, nor will you be able to race it in any official categories - so this is a trackday special at a huge price. Maserati plans to build about 12 MC12 Corsas a year.

John Hartley is editor of

, an online magazine devoted to fast cars and

supercars. He has written from many of the world's top auto magazines, and has written many books about cars and the auto industry, including 'Suspension and Steering Q&A'.

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