



HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING

HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING is a *Tony-and-Pulitzer-Prize-winning musical comedy that takes a satirical look at big business and all that it holds sacred. Set in the 1960s, HOW TO SUCCEED took Broadway by storm with its clever lampoon of life on the corporate ladder and features a well-known score with songs like “Brotherhood of Man,” “I Believe in You,” and “The Company Way.” An irreverent, tuneful romp, packed with sly, swift, and sharp jabs to the funny bone.*

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN:

J. PIERREPONT FINCH

An irrepressible, clear-eyed, almost puckish hero, he is a window washer who applies for a job at the World Wide Wicket Company and attempts to climb the ladder of success. He vacillates between overconfidence and uncertainty. Sings “Brotherhood of Man,” “I Believe In You,” “Rosemary,” etc.

ROSEMARY

A secretary at the company whose determination to get what she wants (namely, a man) equally matches Finch’s drive for business success. Becomes Finch’s love interest. Sings “Happy to Keep His Dinner Warm,” “Paris Original,” etc.

J.B. BIGGLEY

The stuffed-shirt, philandering President of World Wide Wicket. Beneath his ruthless exterior, he is a college lad at heart with a passion for knitting. Sings “Grand Old Ivy,” “Love From a Heart of Gold,” etc.

SMITTY

A secretary with a painfully dry sense of humor; Rosemary’s confidante and best friend. She’s a cynical, working woman who is on the lookout for a man. Sings “Been a Long Day,” “Coffee Break,” etc.

BUD FRUMP

Biggely’s nephew and scheming employee; Finch’s rival. He is an arrogant sycophant who tries to advance his career by exploiting his family connections. Sings “Coffee Break,” etc.

HEDY LA RUE

Biggley's eager, attractive secretary. She may appear dim-witted, but she knows how to manipulate men to get what she wants. Sings "Love From a Heart of Gold," etc.

MR. BRATT

Head of HR/Personnel and the most trusted man in the company. Sings "A Secretary is Not a Toy," etc.

MR. TWIMBLE

A fussy, old-fashioned, yet loyal employee at the company. Supervisor of the mailroom, he believes his success is due to his lack of ambition and ability to remain unnoticed. A genuinely likeable guy. Sings "The Company Way," etc.

MR. GATCH

A confident executive with a penchant for the ladies.

MISS JONES

J.B.'s stuffy secretary who is abrupt and tough, but soft and kind to those who are good to her. She keeps Biggley in line, and all of the employees try to stay out of her way.

WALLY WOMPER

The company's Chairman of the Board and a former window-washer.

OVINGTON

New head of advertising.

MISS KRUMHOLTZ

Mr. Gatch's secretary.

ENSEMBLE: Junior Executives, Secretaries, Mail Room Clerks, Treasure Hunt Pirates, etc.

KEEP SCROLLING FOR A PLOT SUMMARY OF *HOW TO SUCCEED!*

Act I

J. Pierrepont Finch is discovered washing the windows of the World Wide Wicket Company, more engrossed in the book he is reading than the task in hand. The pre-recorded “Book Voice,” heard periodically throughout the show, encourages him to start his upward climb with the aid of a few simple rules (“How to Succeed”).

Inside the bustling building, he gets off to an inauspicious start by knocking over J.B. Biggley, the President of the company. Turning this encounter to his advantage and encouraged by Rosemary, a young secretary who is smitten at first sight (“Happy to Keep His Dinner Warm”), Finch insinuates himself into the office of the Personnel Manager, Mr. Bratt, and thence to a job in the mail room. There he is made unwelcome by J.B.'s nephew, the odious Bud Frump, who has a lot of ambition and little talent for work - but impresses the mail room head, the conscientious and long-serving Mr. Twimble (“The Company Way”).

Finch is not destined to spend long at such lowly levels and, quickly learning the book rules, bypasses the head of the mail room job to become a junior executive under Mr. Gatch, Head of Plans and Systems. Miss Jones, J.B.'s secretary, comes under Finch's spell and lets slip some useful information on J.B.'s background which gives Finch more insight and a leg up. The arrival of J.B.'s ex-night-club cigarette girl Hedy La Rue, intent on improving her career (“A Secretary is Not a Toy”), provides Finch with an opportunity to depose the flirtatious Gatch.

While Frump tries all ways to trip up Finch (and Rosemary all ways to ensnare him; “It’s Been A Long Day”), Finch rapidly climbs the ladder. The end of Act I finds him engaged to Rosemary and appointed Vice-President In Charge Of Advertising - which, as the Book Voice points out, is a dangerous place to be.

Act II

Rosemary, now Finch's secretary but playing second fiddle to his career ambitions, is at the point of resigning but is persuaded by her friend Smitty and the rest of the girls to reconsider.

Finch faces a critical deadline to come up with a revolutionary advertising plan, and is deluded by Frump into proposing a TV treasure hunt. Finch boosts his own self confidence while the other executives warn each other about Finch’s meteoric rise through the company (“I Believe In You/Gotta Stop That Man”). Frump looks forward to Finch’s downfall, since Bud is confident the treasure hunt idea will receive a scornful reception from J.B. - but J.B. seizes on it to solve his own problem: keeping Hedy LaRue happy. So Finch survives.

When Hedy drops a bomb on live TV by revealing where the treasure is hidden, Finch again seems destined for the chop - but he appeals to his superiors’ finer instincts (“The Brotherhood of Man”). Fate sticks by him in the shape of Mr. Womper, the Chairman of the Board; having also started his career washing windows, Womper takes an immediate fancy to Finch and, coincidentally, to Hedy La Rue, thus solving both their career problems. As for Frump, he inherits the window washing business, and the book.