

Priceless Business Wisdom

21 business leaders share their best insights on how to create
far more success in your business...



With the compliments of
Lindsay Armishaw
Futureproof Life
www.futureprooflife.co.nz

Welcome



I am always searching for helpful ideas that I can pass along to my valued clients and friends.

That's why I am delighted to share with you this wonderful new guide called '*Priceless Business Wisdom-Volume 1.*'

In this guide, marketing expert Graham McGregor asked 21 business leaders around the world some fascinating questions about their business experiences.

And the answers they gave him contain some priceless nuggets of wisdom that you can use to make your own business far more successful.

I invite you to take some time and read the insightful comments that many of these business leaders have shared.

And put some of them into action in your business.

I look forward to hearing what you found most useful in this guide.

Kind regards

Lindsay Armishaw

P. (09) 413 6070
F. (09) 413 6071
M. 021 673 019
E. lindsay@futureprooflife.co.nz
www.futureprooflife.co.nz

futureproof *life*™
Because *life* is unpredictable

To acquire knowledge, one must study; but to acquire wisdom, one must observe..

Marilyn vos Savant

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Introduction



There is a wonderful Chinese proverb that goes like this...

'A single conversation across the table with a wise man is worth a month's study of books.'

Whenever I talk with other business people I notice that many of us have found that our biggest successes are the direct result of having received some helpful advice at the right time.

In many instances just one piece of good advice has saved us months of hard work or helped us to unlock great business opportunities that we had never noticed before.

So where do you get great business advice from?

One way is to find people who have already enjoyed great success in business and ask them interesting questions like these...



- ✓ If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?
- ✓ What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?
- ✓ What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book?
- ✓ What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?
- ✓ What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?
- ✓ If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

Which brings me to the purpose of this new guide 'Priceless Business Wisdom-Volume 1'

To create this guide, I invited 21 business leaders from around the world to answer all these questions. The leaders I selected came from a wide range of industries and all had enjoyed great success in their chosen fields.

The one thing they all had in common is that each person shared business insights and observations that are literally 'worth their weight in gold'.

This is one of the reasons I've called the guide 'Priceless Business Wisdom'.

In the next few pages you'll discover the remarkable wisdom that these 21 business leaders so generously shared with me.

I recommend that you read through this guide a number of times and make note of the comments and insights that are particularly relevant for your own business situation.

Introduction

continued

Then put some of these ideas into action and notice what happens.

I look forward to hearing what you find most helpful.

Graham McGregor

PS: I'd like to give a huge acknowledgement and BIG THANK YOU to all the business leaders who participated in this guide. I have personally found great value from what every single person had to say. (And I trust you do.)

PPS: I'm a huge fan of taking time each day to smile and look at the funny side of life.

So I am delighted that one of the business leaders in this guide is my favourite cartoonist Randy Glasbergen.

Randy shares his business insights based on over 30 years as a successful cartoonist.

And he has generously allowed me to include some of his cartoons in this guide as well.

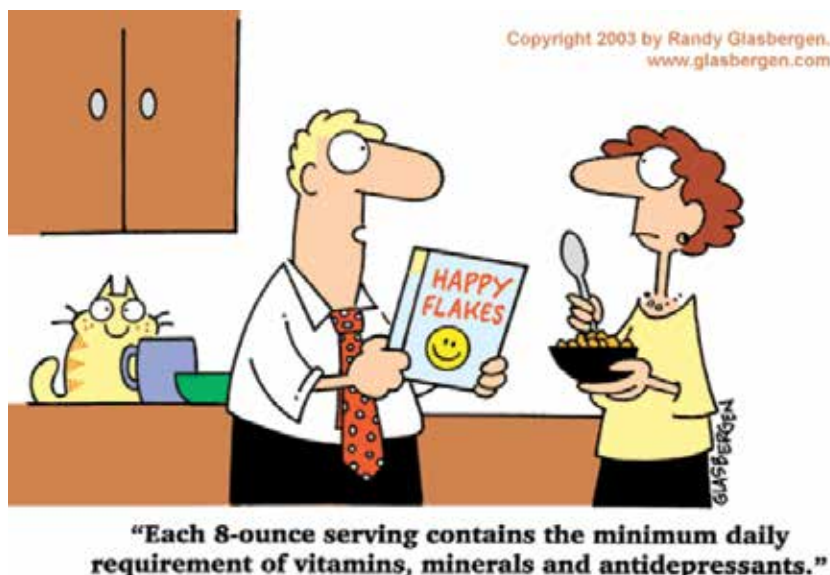
This means you can celebrate the funny side of life at the same time as you read some "Priceless Business Wisdom".

You are also very welcome to get a copy of a 28 page guide called Smile Marketing.

This explains five helpful ways to use humour and cartoons to make more sales in any business. You can download it for FREE @ <http://www.glasbergen.com/smile.pdf>

Now grab a pen and let's get started....

Smile Break:



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Jane Applegate



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

The Applegate Group Inc. is a multimedia production and consulting company.

We focus on providing timely and entertaining content for small business owners around the world.

I founded TAG in 1991, shortly after leaving my position as the small business columnist of the Los Angeles Times.

This is a very niche business. We only do one thing... create innovative content sponsored mostly by companies trying to sell products and services to entrepreneurs around the world.

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?



If I was starting this business today, I would take advantage of all the new tools and technologies.

I would invest in a fantastic website from day one. It took me several years to create a website that showcases our video production.

When we started in 1991, the internet was a far cry from what it is today.

Our site, <http://www.theapplegatenetwork.com>, is built on Word Press and has a high-end video player. That technology was not available 22 years ago.

I would have also hired a better marketing person. I hired a consultant who was more talk than action. He also had serious ethical problems and created tension between my company and our corporate clients.

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

When I got my first financial reporting job, my wise editor, Bob Witty, told me to focus on the people side of business and not the numbers.

This was invaluable advice, especially since my math skills are very poor and I would have never made it based on that part of the business.

I also learned to listen more than talk.

People think good reporters are aggressive and pushy, but the opposite is true.

I was trained to do my homework, write down my questions and shut up.

Through the years, being a good listener and reader of body language has contributed largely to my personal and professional success.

Forget the money; it's all about the people.

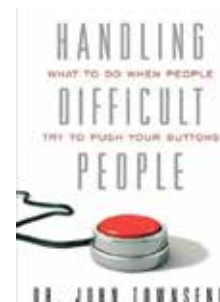
Jane Applegate

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What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book

Handling Difficult People, by Dr. John Townsend, (Integrity House) is pocket-sized, 123-page gem. Townsend is a psychologist in Southern California.

The book has helped me deal with all sorts of challenging clients. He provides tools and skills for coping with people who 'push your buttons.' He suggests creating a loving and supportive team to help you figure out what you want to say to the difficult person. You meet with your team before the conversation to prepare and then meet with them afterward to help you recover from the difficult conversation.



I also love *Competitive Intelligence Advantage*, by Seen Sharp. (Wiley).

Sharp explains how important it is to know what your competition is up to before making any business decisions. She has a great newsletter that you can subscribe to at: <http://www.sharpmarket.com>. The most valuable lesson learned is to focus on what your customers want and need from you before you start worrying about your competition.

What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?

Never work with anyone who gives you a headache or a stomach ache.

Trusting your 'gut' really counts when it comes to doing business. I've regretted working with clients who made me sick.

No amount of money is worth the stress. I've walked away from lucrative projects because I knew they would turn my life into a waking nightmare.

Another lesson is to cut your losses.

Fire employees who create problems and don't be afraid to admit you've made hiring mistakes. Small business owners don't have the money or time to waste on non-productive or troublesome employees (or contractors). Surround yourself with energetic, talented and smart people and you will achieve success sooner.

What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

Creating quality content takes time and thought. There is so much junk out there created by 'bloggers in their pyjamas.'

If you are going to produce sponsored content, you have to be a respected expert in your field. You have to make sure the quality is always top notch. Don't cut corners. Spend all the money you can on the production quality. Hire the best team you can and always 'under promise' and 'over deliver.'

We have worked with the most prestigious companies in the world---Microsoft, American Express, Bloomberg, Sprint, Wells Fargo, IBM, Dell, etc. We rely on personal recommendations and we work very hard to maintain our high production standards.

Jane Applegate

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If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

Find a need a fill it. There are thousands of talented people doing the same thing that you do. So, you really need to set yourself apart. Listen carefully to clients and potential customers. Don't push your ideas on them. Find out their pain points and do what you can to eliminate that pain.

Jane Applegate is America's most respected small business management expert. In 1991, she left her position as the syndicated small business columnist for the Los Angeles Times to create a company devoted exclusively to providing resources and information for small business owners.

The Applegate Group Inc. is a multimedia production and consulting firm that connects major corporations with small business owners.

TAG has produced original video and online content sponsored by American Express, Bloomberg TV, Microsoft, Wells Fargo Bank, MasterCard, Verizon Wireless, IBM, among others. TAG also produces contests and live events for business owners, most recently the '24-Hour Small Business Makeover' sponsored by Epson, Microsoft and Verizon Wireless.

Applegate is the author of four books on small business strategy, including '201 Great Ideas for Your Small Business.' The third edition was published by Bloomberg/Wiley in 2011. She is a popular keynote speaker and the leading small business speaker for Bloomberg TV's "Idea Exchange" speakers' program.

When she is not producing small business content or events, Applegate produces independent films. She currently producing two films.

Her small business videos are posted on her site: <http://www.theapplegatenetwork.com>

Notes from Graham:

I first came across Jane a few years ago when I read her excellent book '201 great ideas for your small business.' I love her comments on finding the 'pain points' for your potential customers and doing what you can to eliminate their pain. This is an excellent strategy for any business person to put into action.

*“The problem is not that there are problems.
The problem is expecting otherwise and
thinking that having problems is a problem.”*

Theodore Rubin

Stacey Ashley



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

I'm the Managing Director of Ashley Coaching & Consulting. I established this business 8 years ago to advocate and develop authentic leadership in the workplace. We work with C Suite and Senior Executives and their teams across Australia to raise their self-awareness, understand their strengths and grow their leadership capability so they can bring out the best in themselves and the people around them. The work that we do improves productivity, performance and employee engagement and also improves bottom line results.

Prior to establishing this business I held Senior Leadership roles in some of Australia's most well-known organisations including Telstra, IBM and Vodafone.

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?

1: I started my business with a lapsed network, one I had failed to nurture over the years. Due to this, it took me longer to establish and ramp up my business than it could have done!

However, this was a great lesson to learn from and I have learned that having a quality network is key. You need to have people around you who will support you, challenge you, and remind you about what's important – as we often forget to remind ourselves!

When you surround yourself with likeminded people, they assist in helping you believe in yourself and your vision. This particularly helps in any low times in your career. If I was starting a business again I would definitely begin with a network that had been proactively nurtured.

I believe this level of connection is important to your success whether you work in a large or small organization. If you have a network of quality relationships around you, you have access to more information, support and more resources. In addition, your ability to achieve your potential and the outcomes you are seeking is optimized.

2: The second thing I've learned is that it's OK to not do everything yourself - even when you are the only person in your business.



You really don't have to be the expert in everything you do. The secret is to find an expert who can help you and this is where having a great network helps.

Delegation is also important as is focusing on leveraging your strengths so that you can do the things that you love, have energy for and are good at, and delegate the other areas to people who have strengths in those areas.

This is a great rule to stick within whether you are in a large or small organization.

If you force yourself to do the jobs you hate, you will lose passion and energy for your business.

Stacey Ashley

continued

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

The first piece of advice is more of a question:

How do you show up to work every day? Natalie Ashdown - CEO Open Door Coaching Group



This is about leadership of YOU. Do you show up with a positive intent, a resourceful, can do mind-set, and a collaborative approach or are you plugged into a negative mind-set?

It is always good practice to ask yourself what is the message that you are sending out every day when you are at work.

This becomes your personal brand and in turn, what other people will respond to.

Check in with yourself that you are sending out the message you really want other people to hear about you. This is about you being a Leader and making sure your message is one that other want to follow. It really is incredibly important to reflect on this and consider what, if anything, you need to change.

Personally, I regularly reflect on this. Every day, I check to see how I am showing up at work what's happening for me, and how I am managing my mind-set. It is also about making personal choices for myself and 'showing up' for me, the person I want to be. If something is not right for me then I know it's up to me to change it. It's my personal responsibility and only I can choose differently for me.

My second piece of advice was actually presented as a challenge to me. '*Selling is an act of compassion.*' Marvin Oka, developer of the new field of mBraining, mBIT International.

Learning to sell my services has been probably my biggest personal challenge in creating a business.

For this, I had to move from a fear of selling based on the belief that selling wasn't a nice thing to do, to creating a new belief that selling my services is an act of compassion. This has been an interesting journey! Now what I focus on is understanding if an individual or a group of individuals in an organisation has a need, and what I offer provides them real value and I can help to support that need, then it is an act of compassion to work with them.

In changing this belief, I now feel more comfortable in selling and rather enjoy it – a far cry from when I started out. I have also proven to myself that I can grow my skills in areas which are not my core passions but which serve to support those passions and purpose. Learning to challenge yourself, looking at what's getting in your way and how you can overcome it, is one of the most powerful things you can do to lead yourself and achieve your own potential.

What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book



mBraining Using Your Multiple Brains to do Cool Stuff, Marvin Oka and Grant Soosalu

(This is not just a business book, more of a book that everyone can benefit from. Fantastic for leaders to read.)

This is a remarkable book on the new field of mBraining, which shows you have fully functioning brains in your head, your heart and your gut.

Stacey Ashley

continued

It explains so much about the 'intuition' we all experience, the knowledge we have without knowing how we have that knowledge.

You can develop skills to access the resources of each of your brains and tap into your innate Compassion, Creativity and Courage from your heart, head and gut. In short, you can change your own world and your experience of your world.

As a leader, this book really confirmed for me the importance, the value and the necessity of leading from the heart. Being an authentic leader is about responding to the needs around you.

A Leader's Legacy, Kouzes and Posner

It's all in the title. What will your legacy as a leader be? Don't leave this to chance, make a difference to the world.

What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?

1: People don't remember what you do, people don't remember what you say, people remember how you made them feel. My Dad used to tell me that all the time when I was a new manager, and it's so true.

What you think and feel is reflected in what you say and do...so manage yourself. Your thoughts and feelings become other people's experience of you. If you want people to walk away having a great experience of you, whether it's a one-off meeting or a person you see every day, then remember their experience depends on you. What you're thinking and feeling...and how you make them feel.

2: Believe in other people- it may be more than they do for themselves and I admit sometimes this can be challenging. Perhaps they haven't delivered, perhaps they have low self-confidence, perhaps they resist change. However, It is a great trait to be able to help people to see that there is more to what they can do, the choices they have and how they can be. You might wonder if it's worth it...but for me if one person steps up and achieves their potential because of the interactions they have with me...that's a great result, and it feels good too!

What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

1: Nurture your network.

2: Remember your purpose.

“It's all about people. It's about networking and being nice to people and not burning any bridges.”

Mike Davidson

Stacey Ashley

continued

If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

This is a business. Even though your purpose may be altruistic ...remember this is a business. You need to figure out how you can make money out of this in a way that you are comfortable with and that is aligned with your values. You need to find a way that your compassion can pay the bills. Because if you don't you put living your purpose at risk.

Nominated for the 2013 Telstra Business Women's awards, Stacey Ashley is the Managing Director of Ashley Coaching and Consulting, dedicated to the growth of authentic leadership and happiness at work. Prior to becoming a coach, Stacey held Senior Leadership positions in Telecommunications, Finance and IT and has an outstanding track record for leading and developing teams across a multitude of disciplines. Her teams consistently had the highest levels of engagement and performance in the organization, and she was sought after as a mentor and coach.

Stacey speaks regularly on a variety of topics including Authentic Leadership- From the Heart, The Power of a Positive Mindset in Achieving Your Potential, and mBraining- Using Your Multiple Brains to do Cool Stuff.

Ashley Coaching & Consulting is based in Sydney, Australia.

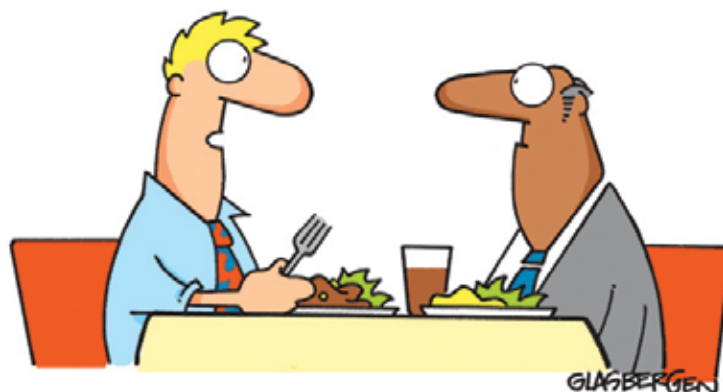
Stacey can be reached at www.ashleyconsulting.com.au

Notes from Graham:

I really like Stacey's comment about starting her business with a network that wasn't nurtured as well as it could have been. It takes a bit of time and effort to stay in touch and add value to the people in your network. However it pays off handsomely when you do it consistently.

Smile Break:

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www.glasbergen.com



"I'm looking for a mentor who can show me how to get rich without boring me with a lot of advice."

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Trevor Auger



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

For the last twenty-five years I've worked in the New Zealand Motor Vehicle Industry, at distributor level, and for five or so years before that I was involved in motor vehicle finance with two of New Zealand's biggest finance companies of the eighties. Most of my experience has been in the sales and marketing arena and in general management. I was the Managing Director for Ford New Zealand and a Vice-President of the New Zealand Motor Industry Association.

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?



As many people do, I came into my particular industry with no idea that I would spend so long in it, or work in such a diversity of roles carrying such a range of responsibilities. Consequently I probably didn't adopt a long term focus to the business and how I could make myself more valuable within it.

Starting over I would begin earlier to learn more about the mechanical side of the motor vehicle, which would have enabled me to build credibility with several stake-holders more quickly and also to better understand some of the issues and challenges I would face over the years.

As I moved into the parts and service, and customer relations, sides of the business I had to very quickly pick up the technical knowledge to enable me to appropriately and professionally manage customer issues and media relations – I didn't need to be a specialist, but I needed to know enough.

I came into the business at a time when the New Zealand motor industry was seriously depressed and through my early years in the business a number of Dealerships, including ones with whom I worked, failed.

Again in hindsight, I could probably have been firmer and more prescriptive in working with Dealerships struggling financially and not doing enough to recognise and manage the realities of their situation. I would also ask for specialist help sooner to try and avert the financial collapses which some of these businesses suffered. Experience is a fine teacher, but unfortunately without that experience we often don't know what we don't know.

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

The most important piece of advice I've received came from a former manager when I was appointed to a senior position at a time that I wasn't expecting it – the advice was essentially to be myself and to believe in myself – I had been promoted to the position I'd attained because of what I had achieved in the business and, importantly, how I had achieved it. The advice was that having got to where I had, by being and behaving the way I had, there was no need to change or to try and be other than myself in executing the new role – I just had to stick with the behaviour and dedication that had got me there and I would continue to do credit to myself, and, to the business.

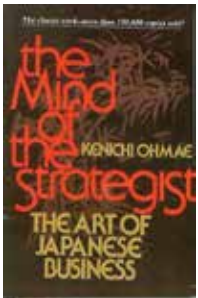
The second piece of advice was from a leader in business and sport, who told me about the 'smile in the mirror' test. No matter how rewarding, or how challenging, the preceding hours may have been, always be able to look in the mirror at the end of the day and smile at yourself, knowing that whatever the day may have brought, you had done your best. There is no better way to switch off the stresses of the day and climb into bed relaxed and without the weight of the world bearing down on you. Perhaps it is no coincidence, that after 'smiling in the mirror' I have rarely woken in the night thinking of the office or lain awake worried

Trevor Auger

continued

about what has happened the day before or what the next day might bring. Far better that one wakes the next morning refreshed and raring to go. And most significantly, if you can 'smile in the mirror' you know you have been true to yourself, and nothing in business is more important than that.

What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book



I'll go firstly with "The Mind of the Strategist: The Art of Japanese Business" by Kenichi Ohmae.

This was one of the first 'academic' business books which I read, prior to achieving a tertiary business qualification and the Japanese mind-set was particularly relevant as I was working for a Japanese car company at the time.

Most importantly, I took from this book a much greater appreciation of the intricacies of business strategy.

The reminder remains with me, that in business, as in life, nothing happens in isolation – everything you do in your business influences, and generates a reaction not just within the business but externally as well, amongst your customers, amongst the wider public, and critically, amongst your competitors.

Sometimes I think one of the great weaknesses of many businesses is that they fail to pay sufficient mind to how their competitors will respond to their actions – managing this contingency is a critical component in launching a successful and enduring initiative.

My second selection is Douglas Brinkley's magnificent work, "Wheels for the World: Henry Ford, His Company, and a Century of Progress". To move a great brand forward I believe it is very important to understand not just where it has been, but how it has evolved and developed the culture which those of us now working in the company have inherited.

What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?



Firstly, and most importantly, I've learned how important it is to trust yourself.

Most of the time, if you adopt a consistent approach and have a clear goal, the right answer is there in front of you.

Too many of the decisions which I look back on with less satisfaction have been decisions made as a result of trying to compromise or trying to please too many people, rather than following my gut instinct.

Secondly, I have been reminded many times that different stakeholders see the same actions in completely different ways. That makes communication critical, and communication is about far more than passing on the facts – it is about telling the story and engaging your various audiences and, critically, it is painting the picture from your audiences' perspectives. Fundamental sales really...., selling the benefit and not just the feature. Usually how you communicate is as important as what you communicate if the measure of success is audience buy-in.

Trevor Auger

continued

What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

Never underestimate how much passion your customers have for your brand and your product. Working in the business you can often become blasé about what to others is the exceptional. That has been brought home to me several times when enthusiasts for our brand have told me how lucky I am to be working for Ford, and how for them that would be a dream come true. Respect and honour that passion, and harness it wherever you can to help strengthen your brand.

Success in the new vehicle industry depends to a large extent on the quality of the franchisor-franchisee relationship. It is always important to remember that while you will often have common goals with your franchisees or Dealers, your agendas will never be entirely the same. Always remember this and see the business not just from the Distributor's point of view but from the Dealer's as well. Think of the consequences of everything you do for your Dealers, and never forget that many of them have their entire lives invested in the success of their business.

If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

Always put the customer at the centre of your business. With the customer at the centre of the business everything else generally falls into place and the solutions to most quandaries become wonderfully clear. As banners around Ford plants used to say: "The Customer is Job One".

Trevor Auger is a born and bred New Zealander who graduated from the University of Auckland with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology, supplemented many years later with a post-graduate Business Diploma, specialising in Marketing. His early business experience came in the Finance Industry before he joined Mazda New Zealand in 1989. He has enjoyed a wide variety of sales and management roles in the motor industry including almost three years as Managing Director of Ford New Zealand, and he served as a Vice-President of the New Zealand Motor Industry Association.

Notes from Graham:

I first met Trevor a couple of years ago when he was Managing Director of Ford New Zealand. Two days later I got a lovely handwritten note in the mail from Trevor thanking me for sharing some ideas with him. This was a delightful personal touch that I still remember today. Trevor showed me that regardless of how busy you are it's always possible to create delighted clients and contacts with small personal gestures like this.

***It is not the employer who pays the wages.
Employers only handle the money. It is the
customer who pays the wages.***

Henry Ford

Mike Ballantyne



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

I am the President and Co-founder of Online Republic, a global e-commerce business with 4 divisions:

- Car Rental Republic. A top ten booker of car rental worldwide via our network of websites including airportrentals.com
- Cruise Republic - Arguably Australasia's largest online booker of cruises via our "Cruise Sale Finder" websites.
- Motorhome Republic. One of world's top online motorhome rental travel agents.
- Search Republic. A 'Search Marketing' ad agency which helps people make the most of e-commerce opportunities.

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?

1. I wouldn't try and start an online business again without having a talented programmer as a business partner. We had an extremely painful and expensive time trying to build our first booking engine. We were let down by three developers and lost 6 months of momentum. Finally we found the right developer, and as soon as he proved his worth we gave him a share of the company.
2. I would also find the best industry specialist in the category I was looking at entering and cut them in on the action. We didn't do this in the early days, but we have done it with our Cruise and Search Marketing businesses. You can save hundreds of thousands of dollars by not having to learn on your own money. You are literally buying experience.

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

My late brother Paul was the co-founder of our business. He was a very creative, entrepreneurial guy and was a great inspiration and mentor to me until his untimely death in early 2011. Two things he instilled in me:

1. Don't be "boardroom manager". Get stuck in, get your hands dirty and understand the business from the ground up. In the early days I was the shop floor - I ran the travel reservations side of the business, so I was in constant contact with customers and suppliers. This gave me important insights on an almost daily basis that helped us innovate and push our business forward.
2. Go tramping and camping. Paul would work his butt off, 16 hours a day for 6 or 7 weeks - which he compared to tramping. Then he'd disappear for a couple of weeks (camping) to clear his head. 'Camping' for him was a cruise in Alaska or some time on the beach in Koh samui. He would always come back with big ideas about where the business should go. A lot of start-up entrepreneurs only do the tramping part.

What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book

- 1: 'Google Adwords for Dummies.' When we started we had paid 9k to Search Engine Optimisation company who promised to get us to the top of the rankings for car rental terms. A few weeks after launch we had no rankings and no bookings. I decided to take control of this aspect of our business, bought this book and learned about paying for leads via Google Adwords. I put up a basic Adwords campaign and suddenly we had a business - the first booking arrived 12 minutes after turning the Adwords campaign live!

Mike Ballantyne

continued

The lesson for me is that business owners need to understand the core competencies of their business - and today being world class at running Google Adwords campaigns is one of our core competencies.

2. 'It's not how good you are, it's how good you want to be' by ex Saatchi London Creative Director Paul Arden. It's full of wisdom such as 'Nearly all rich and powerful people are not notably talented, educated, charming or good looking.'

What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?

Don't hire in haste. Follow a disciplined, exhaustive interview process, then when you are happy with a candidate, send them out on a coffee with staff they will be working with - as a final check. Do psychometric profile testing. A little extra caution in hiring up front can save you a truck load of hassle later.

Rank your priorities carefully and focus on the ones that will generate the most revenue. Don't waste your time chasing trinkets and baubles as one of my business partners often says.

What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

1. Give good people a cut in your business and lock them in. They will be approached as your business gets more successful but they will be earning too much to leave.
2. Don't worry about getting your offering/website perfect before you go live. Get something up, test the market, sniff the opportunity, iterate/improve your offering. I was certainly embarrassed with our first site, and to some degree I still am with some aspects of our websites, despite the fact they trade hundreds of millions. I've heard that Google tell their engineers "if you're not embarrassed when you launch, you've left it too late."

If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

To succeed in e-commerce you need a fresh angle. Ours 9 years ago was having thousands of niche websites. Car hire from airports, car hire for seniors, car hire for families, early bookers, backpackers and so on. It was a labour intensive model but worked because of the way search engines worked. That approach is no longer the best approach, but it got us in the game. To get in the game you need to do things differently.

About Online Republic:

The Online Republic group of companies include Cruise Republic - one of Australasia's leading cruise travel agents, Car Rental Republic - one of the world's largest car rental booking agents, Motorhome Republic - the global leader in motorhome rental, and Search Republic - a world class search marketing agency. You can learn more about Online Republic at www.onlinerepublic.com

Notes from Graham:

I love Mike's comment about not waiting until things are perfect before you give them a go. So if you have an idea you want to try, put it into action and see what happens. I also love the idea of taking time to do both 'tramping' and 'camping' in business.

David Ciccarelli



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

The business I am running now is an online marketplace that connects buyers and sellers of voice-over recordings. My wife and I co-founded our present company, Voices.com in 2004. Prior to that, I had owned and operated a professional audio recording studio since 2000. Something I've always loved about running my own business is that I could create opportunities and find interesting ways to apply my technical skills, artistic talent and financial interests.

The mobile space has been a constant source of intrigue for me, first with mobile audio recording and now offering ways for our customers to do business even when away from their office or studio using our mobile apps. Speaking of mobile, I was recently chosen to become a Google Glass Explorer and am the first Google Glass Explorer in Canada to navigate, demonstrate and promote Glass. We're having a lot of fun experimenting with what the technology can do and dreaming about how we can incorporate Glass into Voices.com.

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?

Two things I would have done differently include incorporating a content management system from the outset and putting a greater emphasis on growing a business development team. Our company is a hybrid of tech and creative. We produce a lot of content via blogs and podcasts but up until recently, we needed to run every little change or addition to the core site through our web team which took time and money. Now that we have a content management system (CMS), we are able to get more done faster by the people who actually create the content.

As noted, another focus of ours is business development. I guess you could say that we had been doing it all along but only within the last year have we invested in building out a team of people to develop business opportunities and phone prospective customers seeking voice talent. We've been focused for so long on creating content for search and advertising online to attract business that we had neglected opportunities that were ripe for the picking via different channels. Now that we have a team of people researching, qualifying and introducing new companies to Voices.com, we're seeing a significant increase in the quality and quantity of projects coming in from Fortune 500s and blue chip companies.

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

The two most valuable pieces of business advice I received are to define how you view your Product, your Process and the People you work with or serve and then to create a plan for helping you to manage those three Ps.

The greatest return on investment of your time and money, without a doubt, will be your product, process and people.

Let's start with your Product:

All the advertising dollars in the world won't help a bad product. You need to be confident that your product delivers on its brand promise. You know what that is. It's what you tell your customers it's going to do for them. Does it deliver on the brand promise consistently?

Aren't getting as many customers as you'd like? Let me ask, did you ask for customer input in the design of your product? Have you asked them how to improve your service? My favourite one question survey was

David Ciccarelli

continued

“What can we do that will knock your socks off?” 1 question and 1 large text box for our customers to answer in. Try it. You’ll learn a tonne!



But the real tell-tale sign of a good product is if your customers are willing to refer you to their friends or colleagues.

This is another 1 question survey called The Net Promoter Score.

Essentially, you ask your customers “On a scale of 1-to-10, how likely are you to refer Voices.com to a friend or colleague?”

9s, 10s are all that matter as those people are your Promoters. 7s, 8s are your Passives with 6s and under as your Detractors. Figure this out. Follow-up with both your Promoters and your Detractors to find out where you need to improve.

Next up, Your Process.

Listen carefully. This is so critical that it’s often overlooked as a “technical” item. Processes are the steps you’d take to perform a function, such as making a sales presentation, delivering a service or answering the phone. (You can skip the running down the hall with the baby part).

At Voices.com, we’ve got processes for making changes to the website, answering customer inquiries and even emergency procedures too.

Processes eliminate questions. Questions like “how do we do X” or “when do we do Y.” They give your team the power to operate on their own, in the same manner that you would.

Finally, processes are what will allow your business to scale from 1 to 5 and then 20. We hope our processes will help us grow from 20 to 100 people. Now, if you want to learn about processes the same way I did, read the E-Myth, an excellent book series by Michael Gerber.

I saved the most important until last. People.

When I say your “People,” I’m not just referring to your employees - although obviously they are important. I’m talking about all your relationships. I call these people my stakeholders as they have a vested interest in the success of our company. Employees, Customers, Vendors, Suppliers and Advisers.

From:

- How you treat your employees, the office space you provide them with, the technology your company uses, the compensation plan. It adds up to respect.
- To an on-going dialog with your banker throughout the year so they hear from you more often than just when you need money.
- To your customers as they pay your bills today and are the best source of referrals and future business.

Remember, business is nothing more than the sum of your relationships so invest time in your relationships. Get to know people. Send quick follow-up notes via email. Give them an endorsement on LinkedIn. Send a thank you card or gift basket to someone special. They will appreciate it and remember it for a long time.

David Ciccarelli

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What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book



If there are two business books that have made an indelible impact on me, they would be Think and Grow Rich by Napoleon Hill and The Advantage by Patrick Lencioni.

Hill's book taught me how to have a burning desire to achieve something and to use your imagination as the workshop where plans can be fashioned.

Lencioni's book was instrumental in discovering how organizational health trumps everything. You need to have a leadership team, set corporate goals, communicate those goals and celebrate your success once goals are achieved.

What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?

The two most valuable learning lessons I had in business were to advertise where your customers are and to find a way to engineer yourself out of the business.

Know how best to reach those you wish to count among your customers.

We once did a direct mail campaign with a series of jumbo sized postcards to get people to use our online service. What we didn't realize at the time was that our money could have been better invested in online advertising, not traditional methods such as direct mail. It was an expensive way to learn a lesson.

As a fledgling start-up, the saving grace was that we got some neat artwork and corporate branding from the effort.

Secondly, you want to engineer yourself out of the day to day of your business. If you develop systems that are not reliant on any one person, your business can continue to operate when people are sick, away or inevitably move on in their careers. As Michael Gerber would say, you should work on your business, not in your business.

What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

Two things I would say to someone in my field are to:

1: Get out there

2: Be a people person

Tip:

People do business with people they like. Being a likable person means that you're easy to work with, people enjoy being around you and that your attitude is one that brightens the office and puts others at ease.

Around Voices.com, it's all about attitude. In fact, that's one of the chief things I look for when hiring staff in addition to their skills. When it comes down to it, I'd rather bring someone with a good attitude on board who may need extra training than an individual who is talented yet difficult to get along with.

David Ciccarelli

continued

Tip 2:

Being social may not come easily to everyone but it is important to give networking the old college try. This means attending events in person, not just interacting through social networks. Audio engineering and computer programming can be rather isolating activities. Voice actors usually have no difficulty getting out there in the community but for those who are introverts, doing so may take extra effort.

If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?



Get to know the Who's Who of the industry and make some friends.

Each industry has sectors, vertical markets and niches therein...essentially, each industry has an ecosystem and you need to know your place in it.

Everyone is connected and it's your job to find out who you need to know, why you need to know them and how you can work together. Doing business doesn't always have to be about monetary exchange. Developing relationships around content is one way in particular that works for us in building relationships

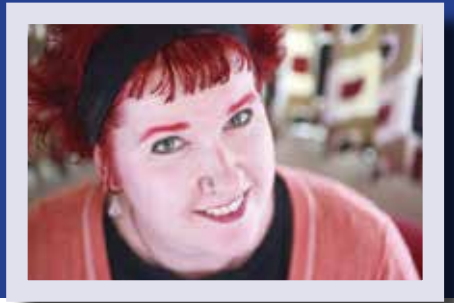
with companies or people we want to align ourselves with. Being well connected, regardless of the business you're in, will expand your horizons and open doors for you both personally and professionally.

David Ciccarelli is the co-founder and CEO of Voices.com, an award-winning online marketplace connecting people with voice over talent. Over the past 10 years, David, with the help of his team, has grown Voices.com from the ground up to become the leader in the industry. David is the author of 'Voice Acting For Dummies' (Wiley Publishing, 2013) A number of case studies regarding Voices.com's growth and rebranding strategy have been published and are used on college and university campuses worldwide. David is an honours graduate of the Ontario Institute of Audio Recording Technology and an alumni of the Entrepreneurship program hosted by the Ivey School of Business. Learn more about David by visiting <http://www.voices.com>

Notes from Graham:

I love David's comments on getting to know the who's who in your industry and making some friends. I've had the opportunity to connect with some wonderful business leaders over the years. And sometimes it started with me doing something simple like sending a short email saying how much I had enjoyed an article they wrote.

Ramona Creel



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

I joke on my social networking profiles that my official title is "Renaissance Woman" -- I have too many interests to run just one business at a time! Here's a brief description of some of the many hats I wear:

Professional Organizer...I have been helping folks to better manage their time, space, and paper (both at home and at work) since 1998 -- that makes me a more-than-15-year veteran, and a Golden Circle member of the National Association Of Professional Organizers three times over.

Accountability Coach...Since my husband and I sold everything we own and hit the road as full-time RVers (living, working, and traveling year-round in a 29-foot Airstream), I have also added "simplicity coaching" to my repertoire of butt-kicking-excuse-imploding-obstacle-removing activities -- along with clutter/productivity coaching, career/small business coaching, financial coaching, healthy lifestyle coaching, even full-timer coaching. (You name it, I am happy to hold folks accountable for achieving their goals!)

Published Author...I work with both those in need of decluttering and other Professional Organizers who want to take their businesses to the next level, and I have recently written two books (one for each group) -- the 405-page first volume of "The Professional Organizer's Bible: A Slightly Irreverent And Completely Unorthodox Guide For Turning Clutter Into A Career" and "The A-To-Z Of Getting Organized: A Grown-Up Picture Book For The Chaotic And Cluttered".

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?

I would have married the many disparate parts of my life together into one business a lot sooner. I spent several years compartmentalizing my skills -- keeping my anal-retentive side separate from my creative side, and my personal life separate from my business. But since I have brought them all together under one umbrella, I am finding that I'm much more successful at everything I do. When you're selling yourself (rather than a product or service that you can subcontract out), YOU become the brand -- and I find that sharing the whole package with folks is more effective than trying to dole out little bits and pieces of who I am and what I do.

I would also have liked to have taken my business on the road a lot sooner -- however, we had to wait for technology to catch up with us, first. Communication tools like mi-fi cards that allow you to carry your internet with you wherever you go, affordable unlimited cell phone plans, and mail-forwarding services that cater specifically to full-time RVers weren't available 10 or 15 years ago -- but these days, you see all sorts of apps and services popping up that make a mobile working lifestyle possible. There's no reason for folks to wait until retirement to hit the road, anymore!

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

When I was starting out, folks in the organizing industry told me to be myself -- in being "myself" (which means multiply tattooed with 9 piercings above the neck, biker boots paired with a mini skirt and blazer, and strong opinions about EVERYTHING), I have created a persona that's carried me much farther than talent or experience alone might. For those who think that business success means buttoned down suits and bankers-business-blue, I beg to differ!

Ramona Creel

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It was also drummed into my head that the more you help others, the more you succeed yourself. I have built every aspect of my business on generosity -- participating in the larger professional community, giving free advice wherever I can, posting tons of gratis content on the web, and always being willing to lend an ear or offer a resource to help out.

I have definitely experienced the "law of attraction" in my business -- what I give out comes back to me tenfold.

What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book

Of course, I love "The E-Myth" by Michael Gerber -- because it focuses on the idea of moving your business from adolescence to adulthood (whatever your definition of adulthood might be). But I also read a book called "The Max Strategy" in which Dale Dauten shares the wisdom he learned chatting with an executive in an airport during a flight delay. One of his gems that has always stuck with me (and informs the way I live my life and run my business every day) is "You can't get to better without first getting to different."

What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?

The first is that, no matter how hard you might try, you can't plan for everything. (And that's a difficult lesson for a Professional Organizer to learn!) You never know what might be coming right around the corner -- every day is a surprise, and I find opportunities landing in my lap that I never even considered during my strategic planning sessions. Again, we're back at the "law of attraction" -- the more you put out there, the more comes your way.

This also leads to my second valuable lesson, which actually comes from a favorite novelist John Irving, rather than a business source --

"Take every opportunity given in this world, even if you have too many. Because one day, the opportunities stop."

Unless I am lying dead on the floor, I never turn down a chance to try something new, to go in some as-yet-uncharted direction with my business.

And that road less travelled has made all the difference.



What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

The first is, never be afraid to invest in yourself or your company. I meet so many new entrepreneurs (Professional Organizers as well as folks in other fields) who are hesitant about spending money on their own success -- and they end up failing, because of it. I don't mean expensive electronic gadgets or costly advertising or every sexy new marketing trend that passes by -- I am talking about personal development, education, building your skills, hiring a mentor who helps you find your way, and making sure you have the right tools to do the job. And ESPECIALLY, knowing when it makes more sense to outsource a job (and focus on what you do best) than waste your time trying to do everything yourself!

Ramona Creel

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My second bit of advice is to gather a little power in your corner, and build your business on the shoulders of giants. Become a gatherer of knowledge and an incorporator of good ideas -- read every business book you can, attend seminars, subscribe to blogs, follow industry leaders on twitter, whatever it takes. Then (based on your research) take a minute to catalog your strengths and weaknesses, figure out your short- and long-term goals, and decide what strategies will get you there the quickest. And if you're having a hard time doing this on your own, find a coach who can help you through the process -- you'll thank yourself later when your business takes off faster than you ever imagined possible on your own!

If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

It's all about networking and building relationships -- tell everyone you meet what you do to make folks' lives better and how much you love your job. Spread the gospel of your work with every human being who will listen, and you'll be amazed at how many converts you get!

Ramona Creel is a 15-year veteran Professional Organizer who has earned numerous industry awards while helping her clients cut clutter, eliminate paper piles, and focus on their true priorities in life -- as well as mentoring her colleagues on succeeding in business. An accomplished photographer and travel writer as well, Ramona resides on the roads of America as a full-time RVer—living and working in a 29-foot Airstream. Learn more at www.RamonaCreel.com.

Notes from Graham:

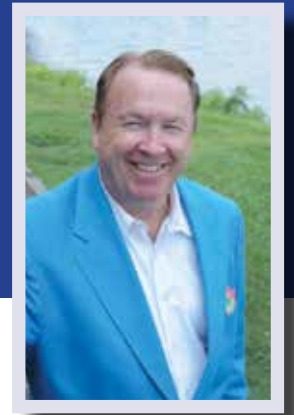
I love Ramona's quote on "Take every opportunity given in this world, even if you have too many. Because one day, the opportunities stop."

Smile Break:



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Jeffrey J Fox



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

My business is helping organizations grow their revenues and gross margin %. I've been doing this for 30 years.

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?

The two things I would have done differently when I started I am just now doing. I am focusing the practice entirely on how and why to 'dollarize', and I am scaling the practice with an online "live" training program.

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

Rule 1. W-A-C-A-D-A-D. An acronym for, "Words are cheap and deeds are dear."

Rule 2. Price products to value and not to a target gross margin.

What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book

Other than my own books are "Obvious Adams" and David Ogilvy's books on advertising.

"Obvious Adams" is about a guy who discovers solutions to problems by looking for obvious answers. It was written in the early 1900s, and is less than 30 pages long.

Ogilvy's books are rich with correct rules for advertising and other parts of the marketing mix.

What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?

In high school a classmate and I won four first place science fair awards. My friend was a genius mechanic and could build things. My job was to pitch the project so that it would appeal to the judges. I learned that few things sell themselves.

I've also had two terrible bosses. They treated people badly; took credit for other people's work; and played suck-up politics. I learned what not to do from them.

What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

Companies need marketing, innovation, a winning culture, and wise leadership at all levels in the organization, to sustain success. Work on those four factors.

Beliefs are not facts, they are beliefs. Incorrect beliefs lead to disaster.

If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

Spend 60% of your time getting business. Spend 30% of your time doing the work. Spend 10% of your time administering the business.

Jeffrey J Fox

continued

About Jeffrey J. Fox

Jeffrey is founder of Fox and Company; a management consulting firm that shows clients how to dollarize their value proposition to overcome the price objection and to shorten the sales cycle. Fox has written twelve best-selling business books that have been translated into over thirty languages. Jeff is the author of "How to Become CEO," which was on the NY Times, Business Week, Wall Street Journal, Knight-Ridder, Amazon.com, best seller lists. His book, "How to Become a Rainmaker," was selected as one of the 100 best business books ever written. His "Dollarization Discipline" was selected as one off the top thirty business books of 2006. He is a popular speaker, appearing regularly before senior management groups and sales forces. Jeff is a graduate of Harvard Business School. Fox and Company is in Chester, Conn. Jeff can be reached at www.foxandcompany.com

Notes from Graham:

I had the pleasure of interviewing Jeffrey a few years ago. And he shared some remarkable examples about how effectively his 'Dollarization' system worked for a wide range of businesses. A great example was a firm that supplied a machine to Asian software chip manufacturers and cost \$2.8 million dollars. They had a competitor that had a similar machine that cost only \$1 million dollars. Before using Jeffrey this firm could not even get an appointment to show their machine to a potential client. After using Jeffrey and his Dollarization system they got the appointment plus a confirmed order for three machines at \$2.8 Million Dollars each! I highly recommend anything that Jeffrey has written on business success. It's always simple to understand and easy to apply.

Smile Break:



"Opportunity paged me, beeped me, linked me,
e-mailed me, faxed me, and spammed me.
But I was expecting it to knock!"

Reprinted with permission

David Garofalo



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

The correct answer is that I'm in the Customer Service Business; I'm in the Entertainment Business and the Relaxation Business.

But the answer you are most likely looking for is that I'm in the Cigar Business. I'm a Cigar Retail Store operator.

Cigars are luxury goods and I consider myself in that business, the luxury goods business. But at the same time, no matter what I call my business, we are all in the same business, the business to make money. What item or service we provide to accomplish that goal may be irrelevant.

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?

This time I would learn as much as I could about running a retail business BEFORE opening one. Learning the fundamentals while your business is already open is very expensive. Mistakes Cost a Fortune! Getting into a business that is consistently targeted and regulated by legislature and all forms of government makes it even tougher if you don't understand how the system works. I should have paid more attention in Civics and Government classes in High School. Knowing how to manoeuvre through the red tape and through a business in advance of opening the doors would of saved me a lot of time, energy and a lots of cash.

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

I have a very successful, rich friend who owns a big, beautiful and very expensive yacht. He loves his yacht; it's the biggest and best at the marina. One day a new, bigger yacht pulled into the open slip at the marina. It was now the biggest and best. My rich friend, now very curious went over to the new yacht and greeted the owner who was sitting on its deck smoking a cigar. "Ahoy...Welcome to our marina" my rich friend shouts. "Come aboard if you like" yells the new guy. "What a beautiful yacht – this is now the best in the marina and certainly the most expensive" my rich friend notes. "If you don't mind me asking...what do you do for a living" asked my rich friend. The new guy smiles and says "I'm a Plumber!"

My rich friend, with a look of shock and surprise responds "A Plumber? You must be one hell of a plumber!" The new guy, with the biggest and best yacht answers "Yes – but I have a trick of the trade that none of my competitors do, so I get most of the business and this wonderful yacht." "What's that?" my rich friend asks with extreme interest. The new guy turns his head left...and then right as to make sure that no one else was hearing this conversation and replies..."I Answer the Damn Phone!" "When the phone rings, it is a customer who wants to hire me and give me money, so I answer the damn phone". This, although so simply is the best piece of business advice I ever received. Smile when the phone rings!

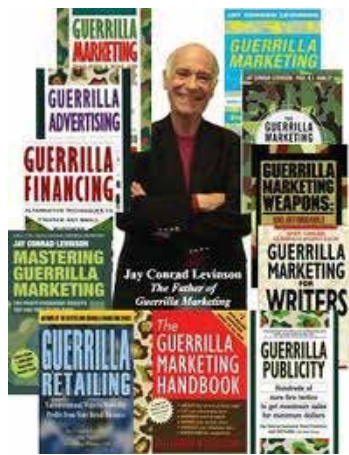
As for a second – Be the "Authority" in your industry. Learn everything you can about it and give the information you have to your customers. I have done this for years in my industry and my customers are informed and educated and I believe an educated and informed consumer is my best customer.

David Garofalo

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I've taken this even further, I have been doing a 2 hour weekly syndicated radio program each week called The Cigar Authority for the past 3 years, which is podcasted for re-broadcast. So I can talk to as many customers or potential customers and inform them as possible. You can give it a listen if you like on www.TheCigarAuthority.com and see exactly what I mean.

What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book



Guerrilla Marketing and Guerrilla Advertising by Jay Conrad Levinson.

These are books that came out when I was just starting my business and they helped me dramatically. It got my creative juices flowing and taught me to track what I did to see what is working and what is not working.

You know, only 50% of advertising and 50% of marketing really works. Understand which half worked and which half didn't work makes all the difference in the world.

And as for spending money to get new customers, when you know what works its like a slot machine that pays off every time. When would you stop putting money into good advertising and marketing if it pays off every time? You Wouldn't! Good advertising and marketing doesn't cost...it pays!

What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?

Lesson 1: Sometime you have to quit, give up and start over again. In the cigar business we always joke that "Nobody likes a Quitter" and that is true... most of the time.

You should go forward no matter what right? Wrong! Sometime you just have to shut it down, regroup and start again... it's simply good business.

I did so in 1995, ten years after building 3 retail cigar shops in Boston Massachusetts and becoming the leader in the area.

A new Massachusetts tax on cigars had just passed in legislation and I feared, my customers would drive sales over the state border into the neighbouring state of New Hampshire, just 30 miles North of Boston.

I quickly sold 2 shops and closed the other and fled the state and the stores that I built for 10 long years from scratch and relocated to a new shop 30 miles North in a new state that I have never done any business in or knew anyone.

Before long, we became the highest volume cigar retailer in the world, and again with 3 locations. I had to quit and start over because I saw the competitive edge and I would rather have that edge than compete against it. It was risky to close 3 thriving shops and possibly hand over that business to my competitors but with the knowledge I accumulated over those first 10 years, I could re build it better than ever and I did. Nobody likes a quitter, but sometime it pays off.

David Garofalo

continued

I left the state and took my customers with me, and as an extra added bonus...I took my competitors customers with me too. I had the competitive edge now.

Lesson 2: Excuses are just that...Excuses. The economy, taxes, and government regulations – they all exist and are more apparent in luxury good business and even more in tobacco as consumers literally burn away their money on what I sell. Get past the objections and negativity and make it happen.

Some say they can lead a horse to water but they can't make him drink! Get creative and salt the oats and before long that horse will be drinking. You need to be hungry to grow your business no matter what. Make them thirsty and build your business or refer to Lesson #1.

What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

The Cigar Business is about both; Cigars and Business and you need to be passionate about both. It's not a hobby and should never be treated as such. That doesn't mean you can't enjoy it – I Love my Job and Business and have for the last 28 years so far.

Please read and understand the following message to yourself over and over again for continued clarity and personal growth. "Your customers should never be an interruption of your day, they are the only reason you came to work."

If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?



Learn from others, just like you are doing right now. Learn from successful people who have made mistakes and who have learned and changed from those mistakes. Mistakes are costly and time consuming and avoiding those mistakes can propel you personally and create business success faster than you would have ever done on your own. It's ok to buy help – it's the best money you could ever spend on you and your business,

I have put together a group for people in my industry called United Cigar Retailers for just this purpose. We meet bi-weekly on the computer as a master mind group to learn and share business advice and continuing retail education.

There may be such a group in your industry too. If there is, run and join as soon as possible. I wish there was a group like this when I started out – it would have saved me millions of dollars. Continued Education is essential in my field and in any business. If you're not going forward, you're going backward. Every business changes with time, even the very old and historic Cigar Business. Change can be a good thing if you are making the right moves. Just because you are reading this right now, you are making the right moves. Keep it up, I wish you tremendous success.

David Garofalo

continued

David Garofalo is the owner, operator and founder of Two Guys Smoke Shop since 1985.

Two Guys is the highest volume independently owned and operated cigar retailer in the world, with 3 locations, Salem, Seabrook and Nashua New Hampshire USA.
www.2GuysCigars.com

David also owns and operates United Cigar Retailers, an organization to help fellow cigar retailers grow their businesses. www.UnitedCigarRetailers.com

David broadcasts The Cigar Authority every Saturday from Noon to 2pm EST with podcast and video streaming on demand at www.TheCigarAuthority.com

Notes from Graham:

I love Dave's observations on positioning yourself as an authority in your field. You can do this at any time by providing helpful advice related to what you offer. Just put this advice into a spoken or written format and you have positioned yourself instantly as an authority or expert in your field.

I've written a short guide which explains some simple ways to position yourself as an expert using tip sheets, special reports and live talks. Just email me on graham@twomac.co.nz and ask for a free copy of 'Smart Marketing Volume 2'. (This is with my compliments and I think you will find it helpful.)

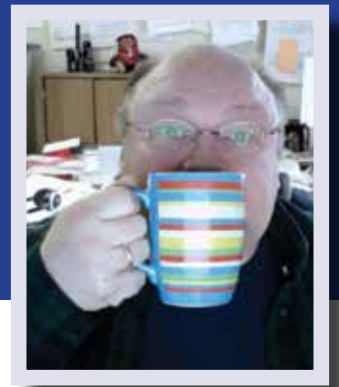
Smile Break:



"The computer says I need to upgrade my brain to be compatible with the new software."

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Randy Glasbergen



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

I am a cartoonist, freelance and syndicated. I began my career in high school (1972), selling panel cartoons to many national magazines such as The Wall Street Journal, Saturday Evening Post, Kiplinger's Changing Times and others.

Over the years, I have gradually branched out into newspaper syndication, greeting cards, advertising, calendars, books, merchandise, internet and more.

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?

The cartooning business has changed radically since I first began. Many of the publications I used to work with are either gone or no longer using cartoons. If I were starting today, I would begin with the Internet, a web page and cartoons posted to social media.

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

When I was starting out, I wrote to many of my favourite cartoonists and received many valuable replies.

Famous Playboy cartoonist Gahan Wilson advised me "Do something no one else does - and work, work, work, work!" Cartoonist for the "B.C." comic strip advised me to "Think Funny", great advice despite its simplicity. Many others advised "perseverance".

What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book

Actually, I learned more by WRITING books than reading them. I have authored and illustrated three books about the art and business of cartooning. When I was conducting interviews for my book HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL CARTOONIST I had the opportunity to question many of my favourite cartoonists about their working habits, creative techniques, challenges, etc.

What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?

It's a cliché, but "When one door closes, another opens" has proven to be true for me.

I've also learned that you can't "force" success upon yourself.

Progress is a daily process, day after day, month after month, year after year.

When you stack one small success on top of another, one day you'll look down to discover that you're sitting on top of a big pile of success.



Randy Glasbergen

continued

What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

Be flexible...the world changes quickly. Know your markets...are you creating something people want or need?

If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

I would tell them to read my previous answers! :-)

Randy Glasbergen is one of America's most widely and frequently published cartoonists and humorous illustrators. His freelance and syndicated cartoons are seen all over the world in newspapers, magazines, greeting cards, books, calendars, advertising, blogs, and websites. His work has also been used in projects as diverse as scratch-off cards for the UK National Lottery, refrigerator magnets, boxer shorts, dog raincoats, restaurant menus, public plasma displays, and taxi cab TV screens. You can learn more about Randy and his wonderful cartoons at www.glasbergen.com

Notes from Graham:

What I particularly like in Randy's observations is how much he learned by interviewing top cartoonists when writing his own books. I've discovered the same thing. Whenever you ask successful people in any field for their advice and ideas, it's amazing how much you will learn.

Smile Break:



Reprinted with permission

Andrew Griffiths



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

The information space – as an author and presenter writing, commentating and talking about entrepreneurialism.

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?

Firstly I would join more associations, groups and networks of people who were far more experienced and knowledgeable in the industry so that I could learn from them. There is no one course that you can do to become an author or a professional presenter, so you need mentors to help guide you.

Secondly I would invest more in developing my personal brand and marketing myself. It is often hard to make the shift from marketing a product or service to marketing a person, especially if you are the person, but that is the key to success in this industry.

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

When it comes to being an author, the best advice came from my publisher – write the way you speak. Don't try to be a Hemingway, just be yourself. Write as if you are sitting and having a conversation with someone. Since being given this advice, everything has changed, my writing style has become clear to me and my writing success has become truly global.

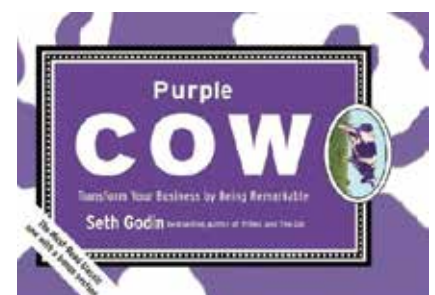
When it comes to presenting, stop trying to be the world's best technical presenter, talk from your heart, be authentic, be honest and be humble. People will know that you are being authentic and they will engage with you. I did a professional presenters training course with Tony Robbins team. It cost me \$12,000 for 4 days and I had never spent that kind of money (I didn't have that kind of money). Looking back, I would have paid 10 times that fee for the knowledge, information and wisdom that was shared.

What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book

How to Win Friends and Influence People – I found this book extraordinarily helpful to understand and change how I interact and communicate with people. I first read it when I was 18 and I read it every year. If you can communicate well, you can do business successfully.

Purple Cow – I love the concept of standing out from the herd and Seth Godin's book was the first one to really grasp this idea and explain it in a succinct way that resonated with me.

This concept influences my decision making, the actions I take, how I market, how I business develop – everything.



Andrew Griffiths

continued

What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?

LESSON 1 – Charge what you are worth. This is the theme of my new book (someone has to be the most expensive, it may as well be you, but to be the most expensive you have to be the best). I struggled with self-worth and charging appropriately. Overcome this, reset your poverty mentality threshold and a lot changes.

LESSON 2 – Back yourself and believe in yourself 100%, especially when others don't. If we listen to all of the things other people tell us we can't do we will never do anything. Most truly successful businesses have a person who backed themselves fully.

What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

1. You cannot become successful as an author if you are not prepared to promote yourself and your book every day of every week of every month of every year.
2. Look at each and every book and every presentation as a seed. The more you plant, the more trees that will grow over time. I have been doing this for about 15 years now, and many of my seeds have sprouted into wonderful opportunities.

If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

If you truly want to be successful as an author, building a successful career in the publishing and presenting space, you have to be prepared to treat the journey as a marathon not a sprint.

Writing the book is the easy part. Becoming a bestselling successful author and presenter is harder and if you haven't got the stamina – you might not make it. It takes commitment, a bit of cheek and the ability to sell yourself.



Andrew Griffiths is Australia's #1 small business author with 11 books now sold in over 50 countries. He is on a mission to energise entrepreneurs everywhere and to empower small business owners to build the businesses they dream of and deserve. You can learn more about Andrew and his wide range of helpful services at www.AndrewGriffiths.com.au

Notes from Graham:

I'm always amazed at the huge amount of useful information that Andrew shares in all his books and speaking engagements. I love his comment on 'charging what you are worth.' In other words be expensive and at the same time make sure you are the best at what you do. Sometimes we forget the huge amount of value we bring to our customer and clients and what it is really worth to them when we do this.

Troy Hazard



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

I currently have 2 active business interests, a speaking business and a television business.

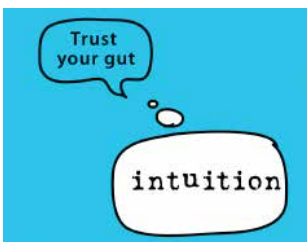
The speaking business is simply me speaking at conferences around the world mainly to a small business or middle management audiences. And I've been doing that since the mid-nineties.

And the television business is a combination of a small television production company and a number of television hosting contracts I have, mainly in the 'business talk' space, and I have been active on television since 2006.

We have also had a very successful residential property renovation business for 20+ years that has been inactive for a while due to market conditions. We're about to ramp that up in the United States to take advantage of the soft market conditions in some states. This is a small business that typically only works on a handful of projects at a time (...my wife is a carpenter so that helps....a lot).

In addition I sit on a few boards as a professional corporate advisor.

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?



Trust my intuition - I've always thought I was pretty good at my research before starting in a business, working up forecast cash flows, market conditions, business strategy and the like. But I think the current climate calls for the small business person to tap into their intuition a little more.

We need to take a REAL honest and true 'feel' for the market conditions and trust those feelings.

There are many things that can impact a business these days that we cannot control such as quantitative Easing, global financial conditions, the regulators, etc.

So, a start-up is nothing more than a belief in yourself that you can take that product or service to market and you have the vision, the passion, the purpose and the stamina to rough and tough it out. A lot of that is intuition, you know yourself better than anyone. Do you have it in you!

Despite my 25+ years in business, remember that it always takes twice as long, costs twice as much and is twice as hard – every time I do a startup I think to myself 'this one has got to be easier, I know what I'm doing now' and every time I'm wrong. (See point one.)

Small business people often don't account for 'things that pop up' on the business journey. When we entered the American market in 2008 we had done 3 years of planning, ten years of on the ground research, and had 25 years' experience behind us – and it STILL took twice as long, was twice as hard and cost twice as much.

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

Perception is reality – the way you are perceived to be is the way the market sees you, regardless of fact.

An early business mentor of mine, Graham Hogg, once said to me, 'if anyone asks you how business is, always say with a spring in your voice and a smile on your face, IT'S UNBELIEVABLE!.

Troy Hazard

continued

You're not lying, it could be unbelievably good or unbelievably bad, you don't have to announce that, but the perception is everything is going great. Everyone wants to work with a winner!'

Cash is king – it's not sales, nor expenses that kill businesses, it's a lack of cash flow. You can have a business that is invoicing tens of thousands of dollars, but if you are not collecting that, you're already going broke. You just don't know it. Mainly because nine times out of ten you've spent the money to provide the product or service, so you already have a cash flow gap.



What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book

Jim Collins 'Good To Great' - while the read was in part like chewing through cement for me (I'm not a big reader) there are some great business philosophies in the book on leadership, culture, business development and sustainability.

Richard Branson's ' Losing My Virginity' - just a great bootstrapping story. So many lessons I could relate to. Helped make me feel like I wasn't so dumb in my early years and that all business people make mistakes and can recover.

What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?

Take Responsibility – you are the common denominator between your success and your failure, so take responsibility for that.

At the end of the day you are the person that has led your business and your life to the place and space you are in.

There is no such thing as a self-made millionaire – everyone needs help sometime, for some reason from someone. You can't do this alone, so don't try. Surround yourself with smart people that want to be part of the journey and share the success with them

What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

In the speaking world

1. One of the biggest things I think upcoming speakers need to focus on is to 'keep it real'. There is a lack of authenticity in the industry where everyone is trying to outdo each other and tell the world how good they are. Just be real, authentic, and focus only on 'connecting' with your audience. The 'wow' comes from the heartfelt connection, not the self-promotion.

2. Respect that as an audience member you are taking an hour of my life off me. Show me some REAL value for that time.

Troy Hazard

continued

In the television business

1. There is no such thing as an overnight success. It simply takes time in front of the camera (or behind it, if that is your path). You're only going to do it faster or be discovered if you are good, and you only get good at what you do by doing it more.



If you want to do it faster then get up earlier, stay up later, put in your 20 hour days and you might cut your time in half!

2. There are 10,000 wait staff in Los Angeles, California waiting for their break, waiting for someone to tap them on the shoulder. BE PRESENT. It doesn't matter what you do to get into the industry, just get INTO it. I painted the studio of the first radio station I worked at 30 years ago, knowing that just by being present in the building it would offer me the opportunity to be 'the guy' that put himself in the right spot at the right time when a position opened, any position. And I was right!

In the real estate investment world – 1. you never make money on the way out, always in the way IN. There are way more sellers under pressure than there are idiot buyers that pay too much. 2. Never fall in love with an asset, there is ALWAYS a time to sell and most times it's the first offer you get that is your last opportunity.

If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

30 seconds is about 75 words – I can fit more than one key thing into that!

"You can't sell stuff that people don't want, you can't lead people when you don't know where you are going, you can't enjoy the ride if you don't appreciate the journey, and you can't be a success if you don't share that with others. Find your purpose, to inspire your passion, because that will ignite your people, and ultimately lead to greater profits."

63 words – ha! I still had 4 seconds up my sleeve!' Good luck, go make a mark!'

There are few situations in the business world that Troy Hazard has not experienced and survived. A serial entrepreneurial, who has founded and nurtured eleven businesses over two decades, and has consulted to countless successful companies over the last 20 years. Through his business career he has owned a diverse range of businesses including a recording studio, an advertising agency, a pizza outlet, real estate brokerage, property development company, leading franchise-consulting business, and a technology business.

Troy's lessons from the edge provide businesses with potent and refined tools, a collection of which you will find in his Amazon bestselling business book, *Future-Proofing Your Business: Real Life Strategies for Your Business Tomorrow, Today* www.TroyHazard.com - www.youtube.com/troyhazard

Notes from Graham:

I really like Troy's comment that there are no overnight successes. And that you get good by doing something a lot of times.

Geoff Kirkwood



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

After selling my previous business in late 2007 I looked around for other opportunities and saw many in the area of services for the small to medium enterprise (SME) market.

Currently, and in conjunction with my son, I own and run a company that offers a variety of marketing services to that market around the world using mainly the Internet.

The first is online coaching in the area of marketing where, via email we deliver advice from the worlds' best marketers on how to substantially improve profitability in any business.

The second is in the area of networking where we assist with online tools and offline advice on using networking as a first strike marketing tool.

And the third is in the area of coaching and mentoring to the same market.

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?

Interestingly, immediately after I sold BNI Australia I remarked to a friend that I was in the best position to run it as I had made most of the mistakes.

So the two things would be:-

- 1: Make more mistakes and make them faster.
- 2: Ask more questions from other entrepreneurs rather than solely relying on my own experience and knowledge.

**IN EVERY
MISTAKE
THERE IS A
POTENTIAL
FOR GROWTH.**

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

It is not uncommon for people to undervalue their advice and the best advice I have ever had on this topic is from my son Glenn who said (and often still says) "with your experience and perspective you are worth far more than that so raise the price". And I have, much to the benefit of my bank balance.

And from Zig Ziglar, well-known American motivational speaker came this gem when he said, "if you want to speak... then speak!" It taught me to just get on with it and stop trying to produce the perfect speech. I now use speaking in 8 countries as one of my best promotional tools to gain business.

What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book



The first would not normally be regarded as a business book, "The Brain That Changes Itself" by Norman Doidge. The #1 lesson from that book was the unbelievable power and adaptability of our brain and how much more I can achieve when I tap into that power.

The second is "The Speed of Trust" by Stephen M R Covey. It expanded my understanding of a principle in business that I speak on and outlines how measurable in dollar terms, is trust in a business.

Geoff Kirkwood

continued

What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?

That from disasters come some of the best lessons... if only you can look past the disaster (as it is in the past).

In 2009 I invested a 6-figure sum in a business run by someone who talked a great talk and was very light on the rest. 9 months later I walked away significantly poorer financially and far richer for the experience. The lesson is to not let one mistake (no matter how big) dampen your entrepreneurial spirit.

That often the best ideas come from collaborative efforts, not from one mind.

In early 2002 I chaired a regular brainstorming meeting where we focused on improving our networking activities in Australia. After a flippant comment by one of the members about celebrating special days in the calendar I jumped up and wrote on the whiteboard "International Networking Day". Some months later I trademarked both "International Networking Day" and "International Networking Week".

Both are now celebrated in over 40 countries around the world and are now owned by BNI.

What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

The first is a piece of combined advice and applies to any business.

"Have a passion for what you do and be prepared to do whatever it takes to make it succeed."

I see so many people in business that have one and not the other and more often than not it is the second one they lack. Starting a new business is not easy and so often people give up just before they are about to succeed. If you are passionate about your idea hang in there.

Secondly, stop trying to do it all yourself.

It's all very well to be the driven entrepreneur and in your mind no-one can do it like you. However there is power in the network you have and people who are only too willing to assist if only you ask.

If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

Don't allow those who don't see your dream to negatively influence what you do. Get rid of the negative people from your life and surround yourself with supportive and positive people who will also be honest with you.

Geoff Kirkwood is recognized as one of Australia's top experts in the area of Networking and Referral Marketing having built BNI in Australia from 700 members to 3500 in just 6 years. He has spoken in 8 countries and was recently included in the programme for a TEDx event in his home state in Australia. Geoff is a contributing author in two books – "Millionaire Mentors" and "Getting Your Business LinkedIn". Geoff is well known for his coaching and mentoring that has improved the profitability of business in 6 countries. You can learn more about Geoff at www.Geoffkirkwood.com

Notes from Graham:

I love Geoff's comment that from disasters come some of the best lessons. If you have been in business for a while you have seen things take a turn for the worse at many times. And sometimes you get some priceless wisdom and experience from these less than ideal situations. The second thing that I liked is the comment about how we often undervalue how much we are worth to the people we help.

Bram Kleppner



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

I am CEO of Danforth Pewter, a small Vermont (USA) company that designs, handcrafts, wholesales and retails a wide variety of jewelry, holiday ornaments, oil lamps and personal and home accessories. We sell directly to consumers through four company-owned retail stores in Vermont and one in Virginia, through www.danforthpewter.com, and through a retail catalog. We also sell at wholesale to several hundred independent gift shops and museum stores across the US, in Europe and in Asia, and we serve the corporate gift & recognition market as well.

I've been at Danforth for six years, and prior to that spent ten years at Ben & Jerry's doing international marketing, so along with a couple of start-ups in between, I've been working in consumer products for twenty years.

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?

The first thing I would do is before getting into any new business is ask two questions:

1: *Is the industry growing or shrinking, and how is it changing?*

2: *Does the company's plan make sense in the context of what's going on in the industry?*



The second thing is to clearly identify what the company has that's proprietary -- is it products? technology? company culture? a set of fanatical customers? a great story? And how long will the company be able to maintain that advantage?

At Danforth, we have a great story that began when Thomas Danforth II opened a pewter workshop in 1755 in colonial Connecticut.

That's an advantage we will have forever -- no other pewter company can ever copy our story.

At the other end of the spectrum, any technological innovations we create can generally be copied by our competitors pretty quickly, so they only provide a temporary advantage. Our proprietary designs and quality standards fall somewhere in between.

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

1: "Never guess when you can know."

This came from Steve Glass at Shufro, Rose, a wealth management company in New York. These days, it is so quick and easy to find the answer to most questions that there really is no excuse for going with what you think, suspect, hypothesize or guess. Get the answer. I do this every day.

Bram Kleppner

continued

2: "Fail fast, fail cheap."

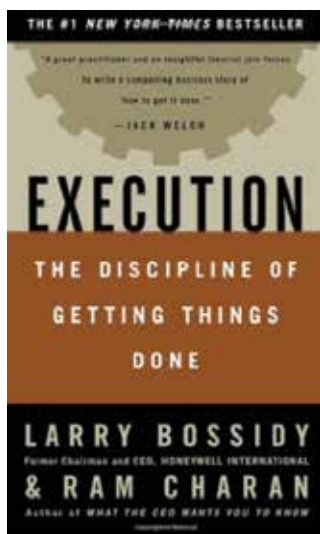
This came from author and consultant Doug Hall of the Eureka! Ranch. The point is that there is lots of quantitative data that clearly indicate that companies that figure out a way to try lots of things without spending too much money on any one of them, and then pursuing those that work and scrapping those that don't, make more money than companies that spend a lot of time and money identifying the single most promising project and then betting a lot on that one.

There is also data that shows that all other things being equal, the companies with a bias towards action are more profitable than those with a bias towards analysis. Try things, see what happens, and react accordingly.

3: Bonus piece of advice: "Plans are useless; planning is indispensable." This one comes from General Eisenhower. Even though companies rarely execute their strategic plans, the process of gathering, analysing and synthesizing data about customers, competitors, opportunities and threats that's necessary to create a good plan is vital to the business even if circumstances change and you toss the plan out the day after it's written.

What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book

"Lean Thinking" by James Womack and Daniel Jones. One of the seminal books on lean manufacturing in general and Toyota's approach in particular, this book remains an essential guide to making everything in your business faster, better, more efficient, more robust, and more profitable. The essential lessons are that every process should be simple and that it should be hard to make mistakes; every process should be defined; and there should be a clear culture and a clear process for making improvements.



"Execution" by Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan. The fundamental point is that there are many good business ideas, and the difference between success and failure is very often in the execution.

A worse idea that's well executed is more likely to succeed than a better idea that's badly executed. This is of course consistent with the above note that companies with a bias toward action are more profitable than those without such bias. It's all about getting it done.

Bonus book: "The Art of Profitability" by Adrian Slywotzky. The book makes it clear that there are a lot of different ways to be profitable, and makes it clear how important it is to know where the profits in your business come from.

Bram Kleppner

continued

What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?

1: Follow your instincts when hiring or choosing a partner. There have been two times in my career when I was desperate to hire someone -- we were short-handed, all working more than one position, and missing opportunity because we just didn't have the hours in the day to get everything done. In both cases, after looking at a lot of inappropriate resumes, I got one that was perfect. In both cases, when I interviewed the person, the interview was fine, and I wanted the candidate to be right so badly that I repressed a nagging feeling that the candidate just wasn't right for the position or the organization. In both cases, we hired the person and it turned out to be a long, painful, expensive mistake. Even if everything looks right on the surface, listen to that instinct!

I had a similar experience when I was invited to become a partner in a new company. Everything about the opportunity was right -- the plan for the company, the industry, the products. I thought there was an opportunity to build a great company and make a lot of money, and again, wanted it all to be right so badly that I repressed my instinct that my partner just wasn't someone who could build a successful business. Again, it was a long, painful, expensive mistake.

2: Never buy a pig in a poke. I have twice been involved in acquisitions in which the seller was worried that the value of the company would decline if the employees knew it was for sale, so the seller insisted that the buyer not talk to employees, not visit the manufacturing facilities while the employees were there, etc.

In one case, the acquisition worked out well, in the other it did not, but the fundamental lesson I learned is that if management does not trust the employees enough to tell them that the business is for sale, and if management doesn't think the employees will trust management to protect their interests in a sale, there are some fundamental problems with the culture that are going to cause problems for the new owner.



What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

1: Build a direct business. The world has changed, and retailers are aware that manufacturers are likely to sell directly as well. Protect your relationship with retailers by committing to never undercut them on price.

2: As part of that commitment, restrict your retailers to selling in their own stores, in their own catalogues, and on their own websites. Do not let them sell on platforms like Amazon. As long as no one is selling your products on Amazon but you, you can make sure the images and prices are consistent with your own website. There is no benefit to a consumer to buying your product on Amazon from someone other than yourself.

Bram Kleppner

continued

If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

Make products you are proud of, provide service you are proud of, and build a company your employees are proud to work for. Life is much more satisfying when you are proud of the company you work for, and employees will reward you with loyalty and hard work. When you and your employees are proud of what you do and how you do it, your branding and marketing will flow naturally and authentically from the products and the company's values. That integrity and consistency is worth a lot, and consumers will reward you with their business.

Bram Kleppner is a seasoned executive with deep experience building brands and businesses around the world for small, mid-cap and large companies. He has expertise in marketing, retailing and financial management.

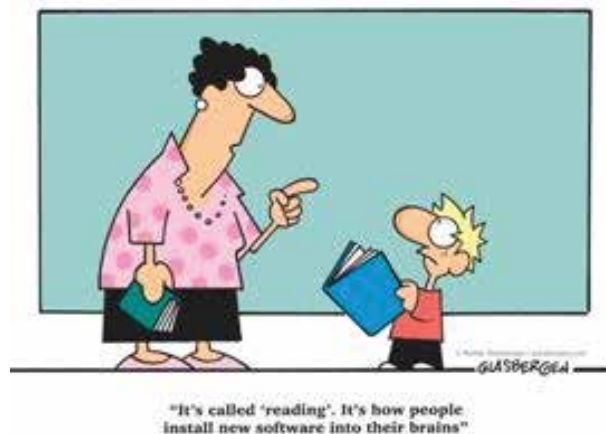
When he became CEO of Danforth Pewter (www.danforthpewter.com), the 258-year-old brand had lost money six years in a row. In his first year as CEO, the business broke even, and in his second year it returned to solid profitability and growth. In 2013, the business expects further growth of revenue, EBITDA and income. Prior to joining Danforth, Bram led international marketing at Ben & Jerry's and Unilever for ten years, contributing to growth in Ben & Jerry's international business from almost nothing to \$40 million/year. He holds an MBA from the University of Vermont, and speaks Russian and French.

He can be reached at bkleppner@danforthpewter.com

Notes from Graham:

I really like Bram's comments on creating products and services that you and everyone in your business are proud of.

Smile Break:



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Richard Koch



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

I write about and promote powerful ideas for business and life.

The most important idea I have advocated so far is The 80/20 Principle, the title of my book published in 1997 and still selling strongly.

I'm amazed that it has sold over a million copies around the world, and been particularly influential in China, Japan and Korea.

I also use my ideas to invest in new and young companies. So far, starting pretty much from scratch in 1990, I've made around US\$200m from my investments.

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?

The main thing I would do differently is get some leverage into promoting my ideas – help from other people, and format that do not depend upon my own efforts.

Let me explain...

In a previous life I co-founded a consulting firm (LEK) which grew rapidly and is now the fourth largest strategy consulting firm in the world, after McKinsey, the Boston Consulting Group, and Bain & Company. I worked energetically enough, but the business could be taken forward by lots of great new people we hired every year. At LEK, I was leveraged.

As a writer and idea-promoter, I am much closer to being a "sole trader" – largely on my own. This limits what I can do. Also, my 80/20 philosophy – achieving extraordinary results with ordinary effort – forbids me to kill myself travelling around the world and speaking. Some people might love that, but I would hate it.

And yet – I know I'd have more fun and influence, and do more good, if I built up a cadre of people who could be co-conspirators with me in promoting the ideas I find so compelling.

Writers generally don't do this, and it's a pity. But it's never too late.

So I'm putting a foot in the water with a new international training business which will be run by great training professionals, but use my ideas as the source material.

I think I can multiply my influence hugely, through the new company training tens of thousands of people a year, spreading the 80/20 way and creating a new army of enthusiasts for doing more with less.

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

When I was straight out of university, I went to work at a Shell oil refinery. I absolutely hated it. But I did learn one invaluable lesson, which was given to me by a guy called Dan Rawlinson, who ran an in-house consultancy there. He was a great fan of Peter Drucker, who started the idea of "Management by Objectives" (MbO). The basic idea was that managers shouldn't be controlled directly by their boss, but by objectives that they set and agreed jointly. And the key thing was that what mattered wasn't inputs, but results. Nothing should matter but results.

Richard Koch

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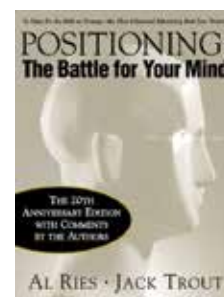
This idea is so powerful and is really the basis of the 80/20 philosophy, except that 80/20 adds the idea of getting great results with as little energy and money as possible.

As soon as I grasped the importance of achieving personal and incredibly ambitious results, I left Shell.

The second idea is one I've picked up from Warren Buffett. I've never met him, but his sayings are so wise that they strike an instant chord with me. He once said that working with people you don't enjoy is like marrying for money – not a very good idea in any circumstances, but if you're already rich it's totally crazy. He also said that you become like the people you work with – so choose the best and most fun. Nothing is more important to our happiness than working with people we like and admire – and I have tried to follow this course religiously.

What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book

The most inspiring book I've read in the past year (and for a long time) is *Never Too Late to Be Great* by Tom Butler-Bowden. It's about to be launched in the US under the title *Think Long*. Tom says we have more time in our lives than we realize, and we should take our time to achieve the greatness of which we are capable. The book has changed the way I think about what I do – I now have a much longer time horizon than I had when I was young (I hope I don't peg out soon having written that). Just read the book, because it so profound and convincing.



My favourite business book of all time is probably *Positioning* by Al Ries and Jack Trout. It's a venerable book but I re-read it every year and always get something new out of it. It's meant to be about marketing but for me it has far more relevance for business and life strategy. If you don't achieve a unique positioning, you'll never create something valuable and long-lasting. The book is a joy to read – sharp, funny, concise. And anything by Al Ries is a good bet – he is possibly the most underrated mind in business globally.

What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?

Lesson One:

I was lucky to come across Bruce Henderson when I was a junior guy at the Boston Consulting Group. Most people avoided him because he was formidable and impossible to please. I made the mistake of being in his path one day and he asked me a question I couldn't possibly answer. He cut me off after twenty seconds and proceeded to lecture me for an hour. I can't remember what he said but what I took away was that the most powerful thing in business wasn't money, or experience, or knowledge, or connections.

It was ideas.

Richard Koch

continued



With a really powerful idea, you can do anything – as Bruce proved time and time again.

But you have to love ideas, and you have to pick one or two good ones to base your business life – or your whole life – on.

So I always ask people, what's the big idea you have?

It's got to be an idea that is not in common currency and you've got to adopt it to your own personality. It's like a horse that you ride. You've got to get on with the horse, but the horse is more important than you are. The horse can go further and faster and you've got to cling on for dear life and ride it as far as you can.

This came from the other great influence on my life, Bill Bain, founder of the eponymous firm. "Your best new customers," Bill would say, "are your existing customers."

People in every consulting firm in the world get excited about new clients and new client prospects. The best people work to win them.

But Bill had a different philosophy. Each client was a gold mine that could be mined forever and inexhaustibly. Make money for the client and you can make money for yourself. The sky is the limit. At the time in the consulting industry, \$1 million was a huge client assignment. Bill shot for \$10m a year, \$20m, 30m client, for year after year after year. Your client gets ever bigger and more profitable, and so do you.

Of course, this requires imagination and ambition. It also requires setting up the relationship right, from the start, with the head honcho in the client. But if the business formula is clever, delivering fantastic value to existing customers is the route to riches.

Bill also had another favourite saying that I learnt to love. "Don't let action drive out thought." Think about it!

What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

1: Find your horse. The idea is more important than you are. (This is true in any field.)

2: You achieve most when you enjoy most.

Nearly every person in business does some stuff they don't much relish. Don't be like them. As early in your career as possible, just do what you like, what you love, what you create, what possesses you, what you come to possess.

The great theologian Harry Williams has a beautiful sentence where he describes what God, the Ultimate Mystery, the Ground of Our Being, or, as I prefer to call it, the Universe, means to him. God, he says, "is the ocean of which I am a wave, the sun of which I am a shaft of light, the tree of which I am a branch." The divine and the human are not different objects. "What I experience is a reality great enough to be God and intimate enough to be me."

Richard Koch

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I hear you saying 'Whoa!' What's all that about? What is it doing in a business report?

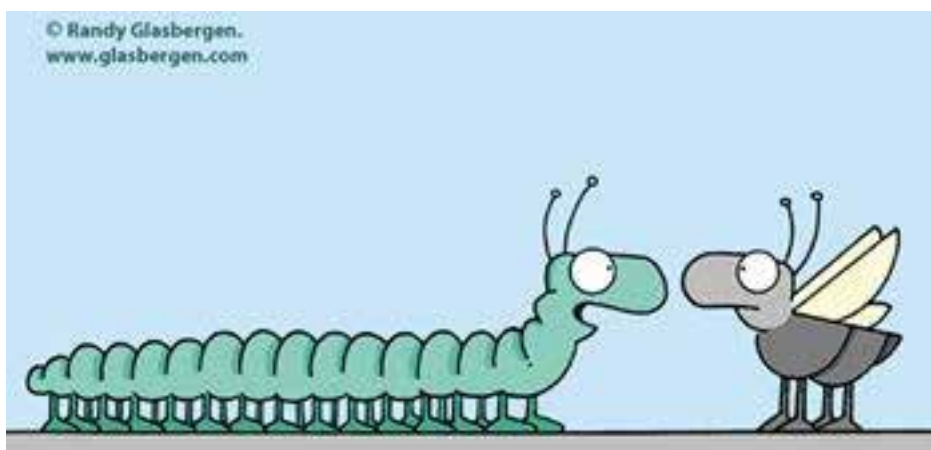
Well, I hope you see the point. What we do and what we achieve are not two different things. They are part of the same reality. What you achieve and the universe you are connected to – the ideas you use, the people who help you, the market you exist in and develop, the technology and clever business practices you adopt, and even your customers – are not separate objects. They are part of the same thing. They are the ocean and you are the wave. Unless you feel this about what you do, you are doing the wrong thing. Unless you are excited about the ocean you play in, and feel a strong affinity with it, find somewhere else to play.

Or, to change the metaphor a little, you are the vehicle for something much bigger than you. You are not reliant on your own skills or intelligence. Of course they help, but only when your ego is subsumed in something bigger. Business, like all good parts of life, is about creativity. Creativity permeates the self – it comes from outside and inside until there is no distinction between them. Unless you learn to be dependent and powerful at the same time, you will not find yourself or discover the unique thing you are meant to do.

If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

Create more with less. Limit your time on something. Create something that is ten or twenty times better. There is always a way. It's out there, waiting for you to find it.

Smile Break:



"I tried all the fitness fads, but my doctor was right all along—walking is still the best exercise."

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Richard Koch

continued

Richard Koch is a former management consultant, entrepreneur, and writer of several books on how to apply the Pareto principle (80/20 rule) in all walks of life. Richard has also used his concepts to make a fortune from several private equity investments made personally. Richard's investments have included Filofax, Belgo Restaurants, Plymouth Gin, the Great Little Trading Company, and Betfair. Previously he had been a consultant with the Boston Consulting Group, a partner of Bain & Company, and co-founder of L.E.K. Consulting. Richard is now the co-founder of The Richard Koch 80/20 Management Academy, an international training business. You can find out more about Richard at www.richardkoch.net

Notes from Graham:

I love Richards strategy of 'doing more with less'.

He explains it well in his wonderful book 'Living the 80-20 Way'.

Imagine you're a caveperson in the town of Bedrock, home of The Flintstones. You need to get to the other side of town in a hurry. Your alternatives are to walk or run. Walking will take forever. Running is quicker, but requires a lot more effort.

To run would be to make the popular option of trying to secure a better result by working harder. Instead we look for a much better result with far less effort.

How can we get across Bedrock much faster but without the slog of running?

Like the waitress at the prehistoric diner, we could roller-skate with less energy than it would take to run, yet still arrive quicker. Or we could go one step further and jump on the back of a friendly brontosaurus. That's a much better result with less effort.

Here's a real world example of 'doing more with less.'

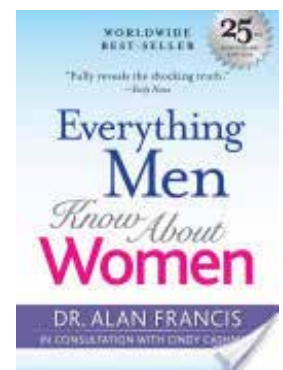
Cindy Cashman saw an interesting idea a few years ago that took her fancy. The idea was for a book with the title "Everything men know about women."

The book was over 100 pages long and inside there was nothing but blank pages. (In other words it was a fun book about how little men really understand women.) Cindy began looking for ways to sell huge amounts of her book with very little effort.

She ignored completely traditional book shops as she realised her book would be competing with tens of thousands of other books for sale. Instead Cindy approached businesses like women's clothing shops and got them to display her book next to the cash register.

Women shopping at these stores would pick up the book because of the catchy title, laugh when they saw it was totally blank inside and would then buy a whole bunch to give as gifts to people they knew.

Cindy kept the price very affordable and sold over a million copies of her book over the next few years. (All by 'doing more with less'.)



Steve Olsher

America's Reinvention Expert



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

My work focuses on helping people discover and monetize their *WHAT* — that is, the *ONE* thing they were born to do. I am an author, speaker, and workshop facilitator whose methodology blends proprietary teachings with ancient wisdom and revolutionary lessons from modern thought leaders.

These teachings, combined with my unique exercises and singular approach to realizing permanent, positive change, forms a proven system for ultimate achievement in business and life. I have worked full-time in this industry since 2009.

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?

The two things I would do differently are:

1: Secure a mentor from day one.

I'm a steadfast believer that we should learn from those who are selfless enough to teach.



Too often, we try to do everything on our own and pay dearly in the form of wasted time, energy, and resources.

An effective mentor can shave years off your learning curve and is worth every penny they charge. Looking back on the mistakes I made in the first two years in this business, it's clear I would have benefitted significantly from having someone in my corner who had my best interests in mind.

2: Trust my gut on major decisions.

When something shakes you to core and your soul is telling you to reconsider your choices, it's the 'bat phone' calling... pick it up. In my first two years, I too often ignored the warning signs of pending doom and thought I could muscle through the obvious issues. Not gonna happen... for me or anyone else. Listen to your gut, it's going to be right 99.99% of the time.

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

1: "You can always go back to pumping gas."

When I was 19, I contemplated opening a non-alcoholic nightclub. I had been a DJ for years and secured a loyal following. With entrepreneurialism in my blood, I was fully convinced I would be successful, however, I began to second-guess myself.

I approached my golf coach, who turned out to be more of a mentor, and discussed my concerns with him. He asked me to remind him what I was currently doing for money. I answered, "Waiting tables, pumping gas, DJing, and other odds and ends."

He thought for about six seconds and said, "Look, if things don't work out with the club, you can always go back to pumping gas." In that instant, he removed the perceived safety net I thought I needed to have in place and removed the fear that was driving my choices. Bottom line, you have developed specific skills that you can always go back to (e.g. waiting tables, cleaning houses, etc.) if push comes to shove. Life changing.

2: "Nothing will ever go as good as you hope or as poorly as you fear."

Steve Olsher

continued

My grandfather taught me this gem and, as a lifetime entrepreneur, he taught me a lot of what I know about business. This statement really hit home.

When he shared this philosophy, it was the early 1990's and we were contemplating launching on CompuServe's Electronic Mall.



The investment to do so wasn't going to break the bank, but it wasn't pocket change either.

I discussed the scenario with him and he advised me to take the risk, but to keep in mind that the results will inevitably land between unbelievably good and unbearably bad. He was correct.

Since then, I've lived by the mantra of "When looking back on your life, you'll most regret failing to act than taking action and realizing what weak-minded people term as failure." This helps drive my choices.

What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book

1: *Jack: Straight From The Gut* by Jack Welch

In my opinion, this is one of the best books ever written, business or otherwise. Chock full of interpersonal, communication, and business lessons, there are nuggets on every page that can change the dynamic of your life.

One of my biggest takeaways from Jack is the notion of being number one or number two in everything you do from a business perspective. Often, people go into business just hoping to earn a living. Jack sought to dominate the industries in which they had holdings. This concept really opened my eyes to the power of thinking BIG.

2: *Losing My Virginity* by Richard Branson

A phenomenal read that taught me about the importance of blasting through the status quo, ignoring conventional wisdom, and trusting your instincts. Branson has had monumental failures and monumental hits and shares his insight in this autobiography.

My single biggest takeaway was the notion of moving beyond your perceived comfort zone and rolling the dice... hard. Reality is that it takes just as much effort to build a \$1B company as it does to build a \$1M company. Given this fact, it makes the most sense to pursue creating a business that provides not only the greatest likelihood for success, but also the biggest return.



What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?

1: No one knows your business better than you.

In 1999, we had built Liquor.com into a \$3M/year business. Not huge, but large enough to attract the interest of venture capital and outside investors. At the time, companies with ideas on a napkin were receiving millions in funding as the dot com bubble was at its peak.

Steve Olsher

continued

Blinded by the dot com light, we followed the advice of our investors and moved to take the company public. In order to do so, however, we had to sign away management rights as Wall Street needed to see 'more gray hairs.' We fell for it hook, line, and sinker.

Several lettered hires (e.g. CEO, CFO, CTO, etc.) we were running at a ridiculous burn, business was suffering as everyone was distracted by the S1 filing, and then the crash came. We were slated to go public on March 1, 2000 and when we couldn't close the offering, it became very clear, very quickly that our 'saviors' had no clue what they were doing.

Within three months I walked away from everything, including the Liquor.com domain. Nine years of work... down the drain with nothing to show for it. While I ended up recovering the domain and have since re-launched the company with a San Francisco-based team, lesson learned—you can't hire someone else to fulfill your vision.

2: Lack of focus will bury your business faster than anything else

As an entrepreneur, it's super hard to stay focused on ONE thing, let alone excel at it. Most entrepreneurs suffer from B.A.D.D.—Business Attention Deficit Disorder, and the syndrome of being distracted by the next shiny opportunity often spells the difference between achieving profitability and filing for bankruptcy protection.



Business success is the byproduct of management's ability to focus on one task, secure team enrollment, and bring the product or service to critical mass.

Pitfalls along the path, in the form of time delays, cost overruns, and other obstacles make the process of achieving set objectives difficult enough on their own.

Sabotaging such efforts through lack of clarity or pursuing the newest, greatest, hottest initiative only compounds the process and is ultimately a sure-fire formula for failure.

What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

Two important pieces of advice I would share are:

1: Go deep, not wide.

Choose a niche and nail it. Establish yourself as an expert in one specific arena, dominate that space, and become the person that people associate with your area of focus.

Too many 'experts' attempt to go far too broad and end up confusing potential clients. My work is focused on helping people discover the ONE thing they were born to do. When folks look for someone who can help them identify this critical aspect of who they inherently are, my objective is to be the only person that comes to mind.

This should be your goal—become known as the 'go-to person' in your area of expertise, name your price, and have the world banging down your door to leverage your talents.

Steve Olsher

continued

2: Start small.

Be wary of those who tell you that you must pursue huge audiences in order to gain massive exposure. At some point, speaking on stage in front of thousands or being a guest on Anderson Cooper will make sense. However, don't waste your initial efforts on making this happen.

Your primary objective in your first two to five years of business is to understand the needs of your audience, create messaging that resonates with them, and develop products, services, and presentations that serves their needs. This requires you to speak in front of small groups (I had three people at my first workshop), be a guest on radio shows that have few listeners and if you land a TV appearance, it should be no larger than a local cable access show.

Why? Because it is imperative to practice, create your own language, nail sound bites, and develop your on-air personality. When the time is right, the bigger shows will inevitably find you. Make sure you're ready.

If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

Before getting started in the field of self-help/personal development, or any field for that matter, you must be clear on what your WHAT is—that is, the ONE thing you were born to do. Far too many people chase the opportunity as oppose to create it and the pursuit of such endeavors will eventually be met with an expiration date. Your goal is to develop a sustainable business that is a direct reflection of who you inherently are and the people you're most compelled to serve.

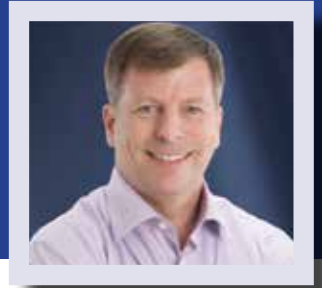
You have a gift to share. Discover it, monetize it, and work your tail off to impact not only those who share this lifetime with you, but also those of lifetimes to come. The world is waiting for you.

Steve Olsher is America's Reinvention Expert and has taught thousands how to **NICHETIZE!**[™] (nitch a tize) by identifying and monetizing their WHAT—that is, the ONE thing they were born to do. He is the Author of *What Is Your WHAT? Discover The ONE Amazing Thing You Were Born To Do*; Author of the **Business Technology Book of the Year** *Internet Prophets: The World's Leading Experts Reveal How to Profit Online*; Author of **USA Book News' Self-Help Book of the Year** *Journey To You: A Step-by-Step Guide to Becoming Who You Were Born to Be*; co-star of the groundbreaking film, *The Keeper of the Keys* with Jack Canfield, John Gray, and Marci Shimoff; Founder of the Reinvention Workshop; Creator of Internet Prophets LIVE!; Chairman and Co-Founder of Liquor.com; President of Bold Development; and, an in-demand media guest who has appeared on ABC TV, FOX TV, CNBC.com and more than 300 radio. For more information, please visit www.SteveOlsher.com.

Notes from Graham

I love Steve's advice on finding a niche and nailing it. And finding your gift to share with the world.

Jim Palmer



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

Through my various companies and programs, I am in the customer retention business.

For most businesses, each 1% increase in customer retention translates to a 7% increase in profits.

The main reason is that it typically costs at least five times more to obtain a new customer than it does to focus on, retain, and therefore sell more to current customers.

My flagship program is No Hassle Newsletters, a 'Done-for-You' newsletter program that is used by hundreds of companies in nearly every industry. A print and mail customer newsletter is by far the most effective customer retention tool available to build stronger, more profitable relationships with customers, clients and patients. I started my business in October 2001, but wrote my first newsletter in 1981.

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?

When I first started, in October 2001, I was working one on one with individual clients – writing and designing newsletters for corporations, Chambers of Commerce, Non-Profits and Associations.

In 2005, after achieving some success, I realized that to achieve significant growth, and build the kind of lifestyle and business that I wanted, I needed to re-engineer my business and use leverage to reach hundreds, if not thousands of potential customers.



In 2006 I moved my business online and that began to introduce me and my business building solutions to thousands of potential clients.

If I were to start today, knowing what I know now, I would start with this bigger vision of success and second, I would also invest in a good business coach and join a mastermind group sooner. This is one area of business where it pays for entrepreneurs to put the cart before the horse.

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

First, and most importantly, highly successful entrepreneurs earn far more for who they are, instead of what they do. This of course refers to the power of positioning – branding yourself as an expert, or the 'go-to' authority in your niche. Secondly, entrepreneurs should recognize that nearly every business has tremendous 'price elasticity' – which means that when marketed correctly, small business owners can often charge substantially more than what they are currently charging – regardless of the competition.

What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book

Without a doubt, *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill is a must read for every business owner. There are multiple powerful lessons in this book about how to think differently about your business including the power of the mastermind, visualization, and the ability of your subconscious mind to deliver the answers you need. Believing the 'Retention is the New Acquisition' - the second book I recommend for entrepreneurs is my second book, *Stick Like Glue - How to Create an Everlasting Bond with Your Customers So They Spend More, Stay Longer, and Refer More!*

Jim Palmer

continued

What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?

Trust your gut. I have learned over time, with some costly lessons, that my gut (intuition) is right nearly 95% of the time. While my mind (largely based on emotion) usually tells me that a particular opportunity is great, my gut is telling me that the opportunity is too good to be true. So, I trust my gut!

Another extremely valuable lesson I've learned is that it always pays to invest in yourself, and in the future growth and profitability of your business.

The money and time we invest in our continuing entrepreneurial education and in the marketing of our business, is only an expense to our business if it fails to generate a return on the investment.

For example, if a business spends \$100 on marketing, but generates \$110 in new revenue, then even though the \$100 shows up on the expense side of the P&L statement, it is a wise investment. Finally, let me sneak in one more – never stop marketing – no matter what the economy is doing.

What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

These two lessons are good for any entrepreneur, no matter what their niche. First, release and let go. Successful entrepreneurs understand that they cannot do it all and investing in a good support team is vitally important as it allows them to focus their time and energy on high-revenue generating activities. Frankly, anything that can be outsourced for \$10-\$50 an hour, or more, should be, as an entrepreneur's time is worth substantially more than that.

Next, successful business owners need to focus on the main goal and objective and also operate with consistency. When it comes to operations, staff and/or customer relationships, and especially their marketing – savvy business owners need to focus and be consistent. Far too many entrepreneurs make decisions based on fear or boredom, often changing a campaign because they are bored with it. A great piece of advice I once heard goes like this: Just about the time a business owner decides to change their marketing (perhaps from boredom), the average customer is just getting used to who they are and what they do.

If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

Be bold – play big or go home! If you market aggressively and smartly, and offer massive value to your customers, wrapped up with a 'Wow' experience, or what I call 'World Class Service,' you too can grow your business at a significant rate, no matter what the economy. I believe in this so strongly, that it is the subject of my next book, due out in fall 2013: *Stop Waiting for it to Get Easier – Create Your Dream Business Now!*



The best investment you can
ever make is an investment in
YOURSELF

Jim Palmer

continued

Jim Palmer is an entrepreneur, author, speaker, and coach to other entrepreneurs. He is the host of the hit weekly Web TV show, Newsletter Guru TV and Stick Like Glue Radio, a weekly podcast on smart marketing and business building strategies. Jim is best known internationally as 'The Newsletter Guru'- the go-to resource for maximizing the profitability of customer relationships. Jim is also the acclaimed author of four great books. Learn more about Jim and his business building programs at www.TheNewsletterGuru.com.

Notes by Graham:

I love Jim's comment on how he had to reengineer his business and use leverage to reach a larger number of ideal customers. Sometimes we get so caught up in running our business we forget to invest time to look for ways to leverage our results.

Smile Break:



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Thomas Thurston



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

I'm a data scientist who predicts if businesses will survive or fail. My team does this using algorithms and technology, which has worked out really well.

As extensions of this research I'm also a venture capitalist and a hedge fund manager, in addition to running the day-to-day of an actual data science firm where most of the fundamental research takes place.

I've been a data scientist for around seven years and everything else I do springs from there.

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?

When wearing the hat of CEO at the data science firm, my biggest mistake was not thinking about scalability early enough.

In professional service firms it's really easy (and comically cliché) for CEOs to rely too much on their own brains.

I was definitely guilty of this.

When the business was small I could keep everything in my head, but as operations grew I quickly learned the core of what we did wasn't designed to scale.

The minute it got too big for my brain there was the painful realization I'd under-invested in systems and processes to properly grow.

As a result we had to make some major business model shifts, which worked out in the end (thankfully), but I wish the lessons had come years earlier.



When wearing the hat of a data scientist who predicts business survival or failure for a living, one of the biggest mistakes managers make is to underestimate the competition.

Everyone thinks they're smarter, faster, more innovative and better looking than their competitors (if they even acknowledge competitors exist).

Nobody likes taking their competition seriously. It doesn't feel good. It feels a lot better to hand-waive and dismiss rivals, simply believing old fashioned hard work will make everything okay.

Truth is, competitors are smart, fast, innovative and good looking too. They work hard too. If you don't accept this and design your business accordingly, it's very unlikely your business will thrive. Your competition should drive at least two-thirds of your strategy.

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

My former mentor at Harvard likes to say "decide what you stand for, and then stand for it all the time." Another way he says it is "when it comes to sticking with your principles, 100% of the time is easier than 98% of the time."

Decide what principles matter to you (as a person) most and never stray from those things due to extenuating circumstances. That's because life is a series of extenuating circumstances. In business you get asked to make a lot of compromises, which can be a good thing, but never compromise on your ethics, integrity or

Thomas Thurston

continued

any other aspect of your most precious ideals. If you've promised to devote weekends to family and your boss demands you work over the weekend, this means telling your boss "no," even if it gets you fired. It doesn't seem like "business" advice, but believe me, it is.

Another valuable piece of business advice was simply described as "no hyperbole." I think of hyperbole as "plausible exaggeration." Stretching the truth.

Of course sometimes it's harmless to embellish a little in the name of a good story, and sometimes that's okay if you do it with the right level of transparency and integrity. Yet even then I'd caution against it. There's little chance it will help, and infinitely bigger odds it will hurt. Bright people can smell overreaching a thousand miles away and it always stinks.



What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book

The Innovator's Dilemma and *The Innovator's Solution* by Clayton Christensen are, perhaps, two of the most profound business books of our generation. They open the mind to how markets are fundamentally structured and how counterintuitive reality is at the heart of business and commerce.

What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?

My intuition can really suck when it comes to hiring people. Don't get me wrong, I'm blown away by how awesome my co-workers are today, but for every hiring jewel I had to endure any number of flops. I've learned to stop relying on my personal intuition and to get better at reference checking, getting other peoples' opinions and other cross-checks. I have a tendency to like people, and I want to be liked, which has led to some blunders.

As a venture capitalist I also see entrepreneurs who play shady games.

In an effort to be "savvy" they can try all sorts of shenanigans to tip things in their favour. From withholding information to stretching the truth to lying about other offers they have, it can be a circus. My advice – don't play games. Ever. Whatever you're hiding is almost certain to be exposed, so be up front with things and you might be surprised by how you'll be rewarded with greater respect. If I get even a whiff of shady game-playing I hold it against the entrepreneur 100% of the time. It's disingenuous, and those aren't the kinds of people I choose to do business with, no matter how amazing their business may be.

What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

If you want to be a data scientist, first I advise you to get as much expertise as possible in a non-data-science field that you love (ex. science, art, business, anthropology, music).

Once you deeply understand a field you're passionate about, then you can go and get the "data science" skills (ex. quantitative skills, computer skills) and apply those back to the field you're passionate about.

That's what I did – worked in technology innovation, became immersed in data science, then applied data science back to improving how people did tech innovation.

Thomas Thurston

continued

Nate Silver, one of the most famous modern data scientists, started with things he loved too – poker, baseball and politics. Then he went back and applied data science to all three, making careers out of them and famously predicting US presidential elections with staggering accuracy.

If you do it this way, odds are you'll end up making a significant contribution to something you're passionate about.

If you do it the other way – starting with generic data science and then looking for somewhere to apply it – you'll still probably get a good job, but in my personal experience I haven't seen people quite as successful or happy with this route.

If you want to become a venture capitalist, make sure you're doing it for the right reasons. In my case, I'm driven to help good people.

That's what venture capital offers me; an opportunity to impact peoples' lives. That's not just fluff, I really mean it. My data science firm is plenty successful; it would be a lot easier to just do that all day.

Don't pursue venture capital for some illusion of money or the status (if status is what you want, there are better ways. Believe me. There are almost as many VC jokes as there are lawyer jokes – none of which are flattering).

Just as with any role make sure it will fill your true passions or, no matter what you achieve, you'll find yourself empty once you get there.

If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

Like Guy Kawasaki says, don't go into business to make money. Do it to make meaning. If you make *meaning*, the money will take care of itself.

Thomas is a General Partner at Ironstone Group Inc., a San Francisco-based venture capital firm that uses data science to identify and fund disruptive businesses. He's also CEO of data science firm Growth Science, and Managing Partner of hedge fund Rottura Capital.

<http://thomasthurston.com/>

<http://growthsci.com/>

Notes from Graham:

Something that really struck a chord with me here is the idea of 'no hyperbole'. In other words don't exaggerate or stretch the truth. There is a huge power in using understatement as it were. Thomas is a great example of this. His bio in this guide is very modest and unassuming. It's only when you check into his background (which is on his website) that you realise what a remarkable person he actually is.

Paul Vujnovich



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

The industry that I work is the Real Estate industry and have done so for almost a decade.

However, the business that I am in is *'The People Business'*.

Although we list and sell commercial and residential property we are ultimately tasked with helping people move forward with the next stage of their lives and this involves the realisation of an asset for them.

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?

1: If I were to start over again I would work much harder on managing my time to ensure that the most important work gets done first and distractions are minimised to allow maximum productivity.

This, for most of us, is a life-long vigil however I believe continued awareness and focus on maximising our 24 hours that we each have is a massive key to success and scalability.

2. Secondly, I would ensure that I planned more balance in my life. I tend to be an 'all or nothing' type of person which can harm various other facets of your life if not balanced out.

The world or your business will not end if you planned regular breaks rather than taking a break just days before you burnout.

Breaks and balance must be planned and not become a knee-jerk reaction to a severely unbalanced work lifestyle.



What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

The most important piece of 'advice' came from a quote from *Maya Angelou* which basically says that...

'People will forget what you might have said and they will even forget what you might have done BUT they will never, ever forget how you made them feel'.

This to me is the pinnacle of business and even life advice and something I try to live by at each and every engagement with another human being.

Secondly, that focusing on what REALLY matters I think is one of the least understood attributes in business and that often we need help from an outside party to help us understand our own motivations when doing things. Paying for *quality* help is the best money one can spend whether it be on themselves or their businesses.

What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book

The Steve Jobs autobiography was one of the best books I have read and helped me to understand that although we can be 'ok' at many things but we can be 'world class' at only a few.

World class is where it's at. It also reinforced that we can only really be world class at something that we are truly passionate about and absolutely love doing.

Paul Vujnovich

continued

'Heart to Start' by the young NZ entrepreneur Derek Handley was a fantastic read that was incredibly honest and 'egoless' but gave many key learning's that would help anybody starting out in business or even the seasoned campaigner.

What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?

1. Stay open to everything. My best business outcomes have come from leftfield and put me in a position that I had, for no good reason really, discounted previously.

2. Business is not about the money.

The money will come from doing an amazing job helping other people solve problems.

Focus on the process and the outcome. The income can't help but follow.

What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

1. Manners and courtesy are severely underrated in business.

Make sure your interaction with other human beings is present and in the moment, respectful and courteous. It's all about how you make them feel.

2. Business is face to face.

Technology will never replace this and should only be used to support this.

The more people you see and treat with respect while politely asking for business the more you will be referred to as a really nice person to deal with.

This is by far and away the most common reason that people refer other people – because they're really 'nice.'



If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

Meet as many people as you can face to face and don't be afraid to ask for business.

Work out a comfortable script and unleash yourself. Passion and enthusiasm are entirely transferrable between human beings so ensure you have tonnes of it when engaging others.

“Knowledge is power, but enthusiasm pulls the switch.”

Ivern Ball

Paul Vujnovich

continued

Paul's business experience spanning more than 20 years is wide and varied.

His real love is creating and growing businesses and finding innovative new ways to lead, motivate and inspire.

From his management and operational banking background through to senior management roles within the domestic and international freight industry and general management roles within the telecommunications industry, Paul has gleaned extensive experience within the corporate sector.

Paul's entrepreneurial side has also been well served with business start-ups including a window cleaning business at 18, an international trading company auctioning excess tech hardware all over the world, to a manufacturing business exporting flavoured syrups to the food service industry, to an investment property company, a property management company and most recently, outside his highly successful real estate business, an independent web-service facility to help people find the best person to sell their property called Find My Real Estate Agent.

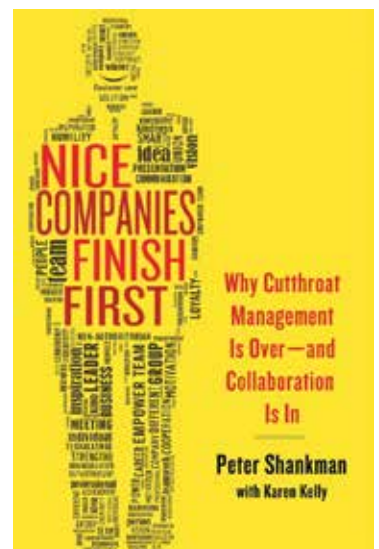
Paul has also enjoyed a stellar real estate sales career twice being his group's top salesperson within New Zealand during the real estate boom and again in the real estate slump post the Global Financial Crisis.

Paul can be contacted at www.paulvujnovich.co.nz

Notes from Graham:

One quality I really like about Paul is how 'nice' he is to all the people in his life. I saw a good example of this in 2012 when I had a major accident on my bicycle after coming off at high speed down a hill. I broke a number of bones including 4 ribs, my collar bone and others. When Paul heard about my cycling accident he phoned me and said 'Graham what can I do to help you? Can I drive you anywhere, pick up anything for you? What do you need help with?' I was shocked at this because I knew how busy Paul was and I was not someone he had known for a long time. And I am convinced that this attitude of looking for ways to help people and be nice to them is a key factor in the amazing success of Paul's business.

I read a great book on the subject of niceness. It's called 'Nice companies finish first' by Peter Shankman. www.shankman.com Peter's book is a treasure trove of practical ideas and observations on how to use 'niceness' to get a key competitive advantage.



Alfie G. Whattam



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

My current main focus is within show-business as a *Professional Magician*. I've been performing most of my life however the magic only really took off last year when I was a shortlist finalist on Britain's Got Talent.

However on top of this I've also been expanding the business aspects more recently as the *Founder / CEO of AlfaOperations* (a tech holding group selling services in the entertainment industry).

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?



Firstly I would have *clearly defined my vision* sooner. If you don't know exactly what you want then chances are you won't get it.

I spent a lot of time chasing my tail at the beginning however after clearly defining my vision things became a whole lot easier.

Secondly I would have *taken action upon this vision* ASAP.

Everybody can talk about what they want but very few people will actually work towards achieving it. In my eyes 'Taking Action' separates the successes from the failures.

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

Steve Jobs once famously said "*just do what you love*".

Now when you look at your goals objectively you begin to realise that the majority of your time will be spent working towards them and that the happiness that comes from achieving them very quickly goes away.

Because of this I think it's very important to realise that "*happiness is a journey not a destination*", as Alfred D Douza once famously put it.

What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book

It's almost impossible to pick 2 as there's just so many great books out there.

However if I had to pick 2 I'd opt for '*The 4 Hour Work Week*' by Tim Ferriss as it taught me to work smarter and not harder. And secondly I'd choose '*The Art of War*' by Sun Tzu. This isn't exactly a business book but rather a book of military strategy. However I believe a lot of the teachings and lessons can be applied to the corporate world. Business is a lot like war. This book teaches you how to blow away the competition (literally!).

Alfie G. Whattam

continued

What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?

Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.

After not winning Britain's Got Talent I felt that my career was quickly over before it had even begun. However within a few months I was appearing across a string of other shows on BBC, ITV and SKY.

I had also appeared in 3 films and was performing all around the world at private parties, weddings and charity events for the likes of Simon Cowell, Ant & Dec and even Prince Charles.

The lessons I learn from this are that *failure is NOT a bad thing*. You simply have to take the lessons you learnt from failing and apply them to future attempts.

Also it's crucial that you *NEVER give up*. If you keep trying then it's possible to succeed, if you give up however then it's all over.

What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

Be optimistic but also be cautious. I completely endorse setting unrealistic goals however it becomes trouble when they start affecting your success. For example it's okay to aim for a private jet by age 25. However it's not okay to make an offer for 1 the very next day when you have no money.

If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

Form a clear vision, make a step by step plan on how you will achieve it, work like crazy on this plan, never give up on your dreams, take failure as a lesson and not as a reason to quit and stay positive the whole time. If there truly is a recipe out there for success then this is definitely the closest thing I can think of to it.

At only 16 Years old Alfie G. Whattam has already performed all around the world at private parties, weddings and charity events for the likes of Simon Cowell, Ant & Dec, and even Prince Charles. He's appeared on television shows across the BBC, ITV and SKY, featured in 3 films and was most famously a Britain's Got Talent YouTube shortlist Finalist in 2012. You can see more about Alfie at his websites:

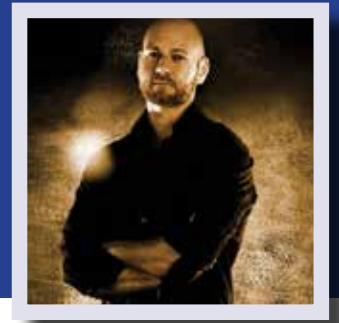
<http://AlfieGWhattam.com>

<http://AlfaOperations.com>

Notes from Graham:

What I first love about Alfie is his comment that failure is not a bad thing. In my own life I've enjoyed some of my biggest successes as a direct result of some major learning lessons from spectacular failures. I also love Alfie's passion for business and the great wisdom he has shared with us at the tender age of only 16.

Brian Whitfield



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

We cover a couple of industries. I own two salons and boutiques as well as a corporate training and business building company. We have had our stores for nearly 11 years and the training company for close to 3 years now. I have also been an associate professor in business and a contract corporate trainer for 14 years.

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?

This is one of those questions that could be better stated, at least from my experiences, if I were starting over today what are two dozen things you'd do differently. Like so many others we had a dream, no money and very few who believed we could make it happen. This fueled our passion to be successful. Unfortunately our passion to be successful was nearly killed by lack of knowledge; I lacked real world knowledge of how to run a business. I was in the middle of earning my MBA, so I had some textbook knowledge. This was a tremendous help that's for sure but that can only go so far without experience and it does not prepare you for the realities of running a business.

*"Never mistake
knowledge for wisdom.
One helps you make a
living; the other helps
you make a life."*

The second thing I'd do differently stems from this question: How do you get experience without getting experience? You find a mentor/coach/advisor and you research until you can't research anymore! I did not do either of those as I should have and I nearly lost my business as a result.

Going back, I would find a mentor or coach to help and advise me along the way. Do you ever see a professional athlete without a coach? No. Same logic applies to business owners.

Take the time to research and find a mentor, as many as you can who have been successful doing something similar to (or if possibly the exact thing) as you are doing. Be willing to pay for their time if need be. What I would do differently, I would talk to an HR professional, I would have sought advice from and talked to reputable CPAs, Attorneys, other business owners, bankers, vendors and insurance agents. I would have invested in books such as this one. You need to be able to get out of your own head and see your business from as many angles and perspectives as possible, focus on what you are good and use the knowledge of others to strengthen your business.

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

Keep Score: Know your numbers inside and out.

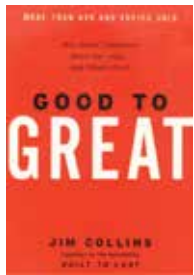
Every day you need to know how you are doing, where you are and where you are going. As a startup it begins with a proper budget and financial goals. When I opened my first store I created an Excel spreadsheet and logged my daily figures every evening as soon as we closed. I didn't have to, I could have run a report however, by doing it manually I was able to see and feel my business, it made it even more real to me. I made the time because I knew if I was going to be successful with so many odds stacked against me, I had better know exactly where I was weak and figure out how to fix it. By seeing it daily it wasn't overwhelming. I knew/know how much revenue I need to generate daily to meet my financial obligations. I was advised to "keep score and do more".

Brian Whitfield

continued

Another valuable piece of advice I was given was to create an experience for your client. There are countless businesses similar to mine, a couple literally across the street from me. What makes me different? Why would you come to my store, or hire me as trainer over any other? It is definitely the experience. Know your industry, know what people expect and go beyond that. Our philosophy revolves around family, treating everyone as if they are family. Give every client the experience you would give your closest and/or dearest family member. Create an experience, a personal experience, for each client and you end up not being seen as just a business or service provider but a valued part of their lives.

What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book



Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Do Not by Jim Collins. I bought this book the month I signed the first lease to my first store in 2003. While there are many amazing books out there, at the time, and even to this day this book made an impression on me.

This book was above my head and my business back then. I didn't understand it which is one aspect that made it a great book for me. I had to research to understand what was being talked about.

This book taught me that regardless of my background (or as Collins puts it your company's DNA) there are elements that all successful businesses share, elements that I can master particularly as the leader of my businesses. This book started me on the path to learning how to lead my businesses, not just own them.

The Prince by Niccolo Machiavelli. This is an infamous book often times seen from a negative light. I don't see it that way. This book has helped me define what my idea of a quality leader is and how I can mold myself into that leader. From a business owners perspective I use this book as a guide, much as it was intended. I use it as a guide to leading my businesses by finding and defining my energy as a leader, my leadership abilities, skills, forcefulness, strengths, ingenuity, courage and determination. That is what I got from this book although it was written for particular rulers of the 1500's the principles are ageless. It is no coincidence that a majority of the qualities exemplified in this book are the same entrepreneurs and business leaders must have today in order to survive, or as Machiavelli put it, to stay in power. You have to keep in mind when this book was written there were no corporate structures as there are today. In reading this book you have to make and apply your own allusions toward your leadership style as it applies to your situation, I love that! This is what makes this book so powerful, in my opinion and one of my favorites!

What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?



I'm learning something new daily it seems and I love it, even the hard lessons.

One valuable lesson I have learned the hard way is, using a quote made famous by the late US president Ronald Reagan, "trust but verify".

We were ready to hire our first round of employees. I trusted our payroll company at the time to set everything up that we needed, I had never done it before.

We discussed getting workers compensation insurance, how taxes would be paid, the payment schedule, etc.

Brian Whitfield

continued

I was excited, I felt official I now had employees and payroll! I was told everything was in place, and I believed it.

Six months later our payroll is audited and we have no workers comp insurance. This was my first time hiring employees, I failed to do all the research or verify that we were properly covered. It was completely and 100% my fault, it would have taken all of 30 seconds to verify. I was told we were all good, but we were not.

As a result I had to pay thousands of dollars in fines, waste countless hours (not to mention the stress!) I had go to court and even plead guilty to a misdemeanor! It's a misdemeanor not to have workers compensation insurance where I live.

It almost cost me my business it was a nightmare, all because I failed to verify. It was a costly but amazing lesson. I have since learned more than most professionals about payroll, employee classifications, all the rules and regulations. So much that I have made this the topic of a seminar/training we conduct for business owners; it has become one of our most sought after trainings.

The second lesson goes right alongside the first. Do not be too hasty to hire. This is a lesson that I unfortunately did not learn my first or even second time being burnt. I needed a body; I was losing money (or so I thought) however in the long run I lost much more than just money by making poor hiring decisions. In my hastiness to hire I compromised my own hiring system and hired the first person I thought would have passed my hiring processes, but I did not take them through the processes. I was wrong each and every time! It cost me time, money, clients, not to mention the stress and frustration. The lesson, create a solid hiring system and stick to it!

What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?



Follow your passion. You have to be passionate about your business, period. If there is no passion I dare say you have no business being in business. My advice is to find your passion and build your business around that passion. If you find a business venture and opportunity that sounds tremendous but it's something you are not passionate about, be careful. If you are not passionate about your business you had better partner with someone who is. You will know if you are truly passionate about your business or not. You cannot fake true passion but you can develop it and you can share it. When you share your true passion, that's when it becomes powerful.

My second piece of advice if educate yourself. You have to be hungry for personal and professional growth. You have to be continuously striving to learn more so to grow, to stretch your mind and your abilities. Take classes, read a book a month, subscribe to business blogs, ask questions. Find and create resources that you can use to ask questions and find answers. It's all about constantly and continuously educating yourself. The more you know the more you grow.

Brian Whitfield

continued

If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

It all boils down to being happy, finding your passion and loving what you do. If you can combine all these elements even the most difficult, troubling and/or dreaded aspects of your business turn in to opportunities.

Brian Whitfield has had quite the successful career as an associate professor of business (and computers) and as the owner of three successful businesses. Brian and his wife Beth have created a solid brand that is one of the most recognized in the beauty industry in Southern California. Brian and Beth, through their business training company, Ludus, LLC., teach business owners, aspiring business owners and entrepreneurs of all industries how build successful businesses while bypassing some of the most common, critical and deadly business building mistakes. You can learn more about Brian at <http://theludus.com/> and <http://www.hbssalon.com/>

Notes from Graham:

I really like Brian's comments on educating yourself and the more you know the more you grow. There is a goldmine of useful information all around us that can help us to improve our results. We just need to take advantage of this knowledge and put it into action.

Smile Break:

© Randy Glasbergen
glasbergen.com



"You should turn off your cell phone on a date... especially if it's smarter and cooler than you are."

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Marcia Yudkin



What type of business are you currently involved in and how long have you been working in this field?

I'm an author, marketing consultant and writing coach. My clients are small business owners, solo professionals and aspiring experts.

I quit academic life at age 28, making my publishing debut in a piece for the *New York Times* on what I didn't like about being a college professor. That was more than 30 years ago.

I loved my next career, being a freelance magazine writer, because I learned something new and interesting from every assignment. After I started publishing books, I gradually morphed into a marketing and publicity expert when others noticed I was good at that and asked for my help and advice.

If you were starting again in this type of business what are two things you would do differently and why?

This question is alien to my way of thinking, and maybe it would be helpful for me to explain why. I don't look back at my past with any regrets. Once I went out on my own, my career developed organically, with one thing leading to another. I did not have a set ambition or overarching goal. I just wanted to do work that I enjoyed, that used my talents and that didn't harm anything or anyone. So it's a kind of contradiction to me to think about going back and doing things differently.

What were the two most valuable pieces of business advice you ever received and how have you used this advice in your business career?

1. Jennifer Starr, who taught entrepreneurship at Babson College, told me once that new entrepreneurs have a near-universal tendency to price their products too low.

She took me through how that concept applied to one of the first non-book products I ever created.

Not only was she right about that project (and I raised the price after our discussion), it's a tendency I've seen in my clients again and again.

2. "Get off it." This was an idea I encountered in a self-development workshop that has greatly influenced my behavior and business advice for some 35 years.

Roughly translated, it refers to our human tendency to project our fears, beliefs and assumptions onto reality in ways that keep us stuck in unproductive conflicts and self-created misery.

Regardless of the situation, you can choose to separate your own needs, wants and feelings from what actually is and isn't the case.



Marcia Yudkin

continued

What are the two most useful business books you have read and what was a key lesson you got from reading each book

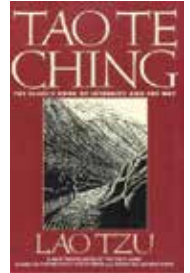
The Way (also known as *Dao De Jing* or *Tao Te Ching*) by Lao Zi.

I never got very far reading *Sun Zi's Art of War*, assigned in many MBA programs, but this other Chinese classic from the sixth century B.C. resonates deeply with me.

I also happen to be married to someone who often quotes from Chapter 56 of this work: "He who knows does not speak. He who speaks does not know."

Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind by Shunryu Suzuki. "In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities; in the expert's mind there are few." In parables, instruction and teachings, this book explains why it can be so challenging to find a simple answer, to stay humble and to create elegance in any realm of life (including business).

[Excerpted from a page on which I profile my 30 most favorite business-related books:
<http://www.yudkin.com/30books.htm>]



What were your two most valuable learning lessons in business?

1: In 1990 I teamed up with another writer to form a company that presented business writing seminars.

The idea behind the partnership was that silver-tongued Susan would bring in clients and I, the quiet behind-the-scenes one, would handle written promotions and the finances.

After a year and a half I realized that despite my introverted personality, I was much more effective at landing clients than Susan was. We mutually agreed to end the partnership. Unfortunately, the friendship ended as well.

2: Growing up, I had an uncle who was a well-regarded trial lawyer, would-be politician and superb storyteller, so it probably wasn't surprising that I associated being able to hold the attention of an audience with having an outgoing personality.

Even so, when I began publishing books, I decided to give public speaking a try. This was probably because I had done fine at the front of a classroom.

To my great surprise, I excelled as a speaker, seminar leader, teleseminar presenter and radio commentator.

It's only within the last few years that I put together insights like the above and realized how damaging are society's myths about what introverts like me can and cannot do.

I now do my best to encourage other introverts to reject limiting expectations and business models developed only with extroverts in mind.

What are two important pieces of advice that you would like to share with a business person working in your field?

Find your own way, and trust your instincts.

Marcia Yudkin

continued

If you had 30 seconds to share one key idea with a business person wanting to get started in your field what would you like to tell them?

Be who you are, not who the experts say you need to be in order to be successful. They lie.

Marcia Yudkin has been published nationally in the US since 1981, as a result of spotting a tiny notice in the *New York Times* announcing a new section of the paper on education. During the next two decades, Marcia enjoyed publication in top magazines, such as *Psychology Today*, *Ms.*, *New Age*, *TWA Ambassador*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Business 2.0* and the *New York Times Magazine*, along with appearances on National Public Radio.

With the growth of the Internet, Marcia attracted a worldwide following of fans and clients who appreciate her unique blend of marketing creativity, publishing knowledge, strategic savvy and common sense.

Her 17 books include *6 Steps to Free Publicity*, now in its third edition, *Meatier Marketing Copy*, *Persuading People to Buy* and *Freelance Writing for Magazines & Newspapers* (a Book of the Month Club selection).

You're invited to sign up for her free weekly newsletter on creative marketing, The Marketing Minute, at www.yudkin.com/markmin.htm.

Notes from Graham:

I love Marcia's comment on shaking off limiting beliefs about what you can and cannot do. I'm an introvert myself and for years I thought I was not the sort of person who would be comfortable speaking to groups. Yet when I got some training through Toastmasters on public speaking, I found I really liked doing it. And audiences really enjoyed what I had to say.

Smile Break:



"Of course you have a purpose in life. You pay taxes, don't you?"

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Summary:

Thank you very much for taking the time to read 'Priceless Business Wisdom-Volume 1'.

I trust you got both inspiration and some helpful ideas from reading what a number of the business leaders in this guide had to share.

Here are a few thoughts I'd like to leave you with...

1: Reread at least one interview a week from Priceless Business Wisdom. And ask yourself *'What did I find most useful in what this person shared? And how could I use this somehow in my own business to improve my current level of results?'*

2: Share a couple of the helpful ideas you've learned from this guide with your own business colleagues or friends. (You'll often find that when you explain something useful to someone else you tend to learn it even better yourself.)

3: Read a couple of the books that have been recommended in this guide. There are over 40 great business books that are mentioned. And some of them are bound to be useful. Get hold of a couple of these books that look relevant to your situation and start reading.

4: Take some time and talk to experts and successful business people in your own industry. Ask them for advice on how you can improve what you are doing.

In many cases a lot of successful people became successful as a result of asking for help and advice.

5: Remember to have fun and enjoy the journey at the same time.

And on that note, let's finish with a couple of great quotes on success...



Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do it. Because what the world needs is more people who have come alive

Howard Thurma

My philosophy is that not only are you responsible for your life, but doing the best at this moment puts you in the best place for the next moment

Oprah Winfrey

Priceless Business Wisdom

21 business leaders share their best insights on how to create
far more success in your business...



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