

Unlocking the key to success in the business world

“You ain’t got a hinge, you can’t close the door...”

By Jill Matlow, Feature Writer, Wall Street Dead aHead Family Member



Photo courtesy of pixabay.com

“Not a good time to talk.”

Those were the words I would typically hear from the marketing manager at a medical device company I used to call upon to see if he had any interest in sponsoring a cardiology journal I was promoting. I didn’t hear “*not interested*” so I kept calling. And calling. Finally, after almost 5 months of “*not a good time to talk*”, Tom, the marketing manager, was finally ready to have a conversation with me.

By the end of our phone call, he signed on to become a sponsor to our cardiology journal and committed to a roundtable and supplement to the tune of \$350,000.

Persistence.

When I think back to what has opened doors for me, I think of persistence. Until I would hear “*no*” I just assumed the door was still open, albeit ajar. Fortunately, that paid off back in the days when I worked in medical publishing seeking new clients and business opportunities. It also worked in my favor as a consultant when I was pursuing new gigs in pharmaceutical advertising.

The (squeaky) wheel is turning and you can’t slow it down...

*Adaptability - Grit - Mindfulness - Can do attitude - Discipline - Resilience - Empathy - Following the flow - Partnering with clients - Underpromising - Humbleness - Flexibility - Compassion - Thinking outside the box - Authenticity - Asking good questions - Following up/Saying thank you - Learning from your mistakes - Willingness to listen - A can-do attitude - Willingness to serve - Sincerity - Focus - Win-win mentality - Mindset

*(*With special thanks to those WSDaH Family members who helped in my research)*

So many interesting traits that have paved the way for success in the business world for so many people. It's almost as though you find your "miracle ticket" (i.e. that one quality that sets you apart from the rest) which helps you land on your feet with great success every single time.

As many of us are now seasoned professionals, it's interesting to look back on our careers and pinpoint that one characteristic that continued to open doors for us as well as make us succeed in our chosen jobs and careers. We're all familiar with the books "What Color is my Parachute?" or "Do What You Are" - both interesting books designed to help us with our job searches and finding a career that meshes well with our personality traits, skills and expertise. But at the end of the day, I'm convinced that what really matters is that one trait or strength we possess that is solely responsible for our ongoing success.

What has been that one quality that has unlocked doors for you?

When I posed this question on LinkedIn a few weeks ago, I received great feedback from so many WSDaH Family members and as always, it was difficult to select just a few of those members to share their stories in my article. I hope you'll find their anecdotes insightful and perhaps you'll see yourself in one of their scenarios as well.

"When it comes to what leads to people's success in business (in all facets of life to be honest), clearly there is no one underlying factor; it's kind of like making soup, a lot of little things go into it and hopefully it turns out great.

For me, it's frustrating when someone doesn't execute on time a deliverable they promised, but even more frustrating when I DO THE SAME THING. The stress, the anxiety it causes, why would anyone in their right mind not 'do as they say'? Why would I do that to myself? Overpromising leads to a myriad of problems, and certainly we all do not need more problems in our lives.

I am no philosopher so I am not sure why we as humans overpromise and underdeliver, with increasing regularity it seems as each year passes. But for me, my success in the business world has come from underpromising and overdelivering.

Maybe we struggle to be honest, and let's face it, being honest at times ain't a lot of fun, but I have found business wise that I have less egg on my face, less stress, and feel better about myself when I underpromise (whether I overdeliver, we can debate that another time). I am pretty sure though the person on the other side appreciates it when I get things done when I said I would.

Based on my experience, go the extra mile, get the task done on time; if you can't do it, then don't promise it. Seems simple in theory, harder in application. But as dear old mom always said, 'don't make promises you can't keep.'

Listen to mom everyone...mom knows best."

[Doug DeRosa](#), Partner, [Trade The Chain](#)

“Success can be influenced by various factors, including luck, but in my experience, focus is the key ingredient that yields the best results. Focus is a mental state that can be cultivated, similar to positive thinking, empathy, and encouragement.

I discovered this firsthand when I pitched the idea of translating Jerry Garcia's art into neckties, which led to a successful program that involved sales, design, marketing, advertising, licensing, and managing ‘the talent’. To achieve this, I learned to prioritize tasks and fully immerse myself in them until completion. Colleagues often noted that I was in ‘The Zone’, a state of mind where I was completely absorbed in my work and unaware of my surroundings.

Whether in your professional or personal life, identifying and pursuing a path with unwavering determination can lead to success. Sometimes, the most unexpected sources can offer insights that can help us achieve our goals. It is crucial to pay attention, dive deep, and strive to experience ‘The Zone’, where the present moment is all that exists.”

[Libby Parker](#), Corporate Adventure Consultant, [Got Fishing](#)

“When WSDaH recently posted the question ‘What is the one factor that has led to your success in the business world?’, my gut response was ‘thinking outside the box’. How has that strategy helped to build my business? The other day I was driving into the city and the navigation was suggesting ‘the best route’ to the city. I started to think, is this really the best route? To me, thinking outside of the box often involves looking to find alternative solutions or just discovering new products or solutions and implementing them in a different way.

I am currently one of the Principles of The Medical Link, a boutique employee benefits company. Since the product of health insurance is considered a commodity that can be purchased through any broker, my partner and I have always been challenged to find a method to differentiate our firm from others. Throughout the years, one of our key advantages has been dedicating time to research and being the first to market innovative products that are at the forefront of our industry.

On one occasion, my partner received a flyer in the mail about a new product offering. It was a new company that was offering voluntary products which would save employers and employees money by setting up a Cafeteria Plan, allowing employees to pay for health insurance tax free. With the savings, employees could purchase voluntary products like Cancer Insurance, Accident Insurance etc. I still remember that our firm was one of the first to ever offer this product in the state of New York.

At that time the company was unknown and now we all know it as Aflac, one of the most successful fortune 500 organizations. It took over 10 years for the larger brokerages to finally embrace Aflac. During that time, we were fortunate to open many new doors and build our client base by being different.

Today The Medical Link continues to find new and exciting products that help us distinguish our firm. We are now involved in payroll, HR, technology, and have strategic partnerships with companies that offer exclusive products providing clients with significant savings on healthcare costs. Many things in our industry have changed over the years, but we make sure not to lose sight of what brought us the success we have—thinking outside of the box.”

[Bryan Erdheim](#), Principle, [The Medical Link](#)

What has been the key to your success over the years? I'd love to know! And by the way, my door is always open...