
"If we fail to adapt, we fail to move forward." » John Wooden

Week 1 Wisdom

I smiled when a rental car shuttle bus driver informed us that we were his very first customers on his maiden drive.

We all cheered and congratulated him for safely delivering us to the terminal. (If you've been around the New Orleans airport in recent years, you know this was no small feat.)

I had my own "first time" event that trip by attending an NFL opening day game in person.

I love Week 1. Every fan is optimistic. Even fans of underdogs have hope.

And then... 30 minutes into the season and based on a small sampling of results, half the fanbases across the country want to fire their coaching staffs... and some of the players.

It may be an occupational hazard, but as I observed the two teams fluctuating between success and failure (mostly the latter), I was reminded of parallels in the business world.

Gametime is not practice.

Things that work predictably well in (mostly) controlled environments may not when variables are introduced. Outside and unplanned events necessitate adjustments.

Officiating can be unpredictable. Players get injured.

Economies change. Key employees leave.

A favorite quote of mine is by mathematician James Yorke: "The most successful people are those who are good at Plan B."

Come Monday

There are only a handful of entertainers in the world who seem to be universally loved.

When they pass, it hits differently.

The news of Jimmy Buffett's passing felt that way to me. Everyone seems to have a "Buffett influence" story.

Just over 30 years ago, my fiancé and now-wife of almost 30 years trusted me to pick a honeymoon location (that we could afford.)

So, influenced by a favorite Buffett song, we honeymooned in Key West, Florida.

I still have the picture of her and me with Captain Tony Tarracino (if you know, you know) on my office wall to this day.

During the week or so that followed his passing, I found myself reflecting on how and why Jimmy Buffett was so universally admired.

Sure, on the surface, his music represented a form of escapism. Folks associated a Buffett song or concert with leisure activity and diversion.

That's actually a little ironic, as he was one of the hardest working and most successful businesspeople in the entertainment industry for the last few decades.

Buffett reminded us of the importance of not taking ourselves too seriously.

He never pretended that real-world stresses and responsibilities do not exist.

However, he emphasized the importance of

When I share it, I like to point out that Plan B may resemble Plan A. And, in many cases, an effective Plan B can only be crafted from insights gained from executing Plan A.

While the tweaks and adjustments might be subtle, successful individuals understand that their goals hold greater significance than their plans.

The most successful teams over the long run tend to be those whose coaches adjust their strategies and play calling in real time based on the conditions in front of them today.

They observe, learn, adapt, and make informed decisions based on current realities, not past predictions or projections.

Competent coaches do not overreact by blowing up plans too quickly, or instantly benching players who are adapting themselves in real time.

When things aren't going according to plan, they look first to fix the problems instead of fixing the blame.

Seasons – both sports and business - aren't decided in one day.

As they play out, celebrate your victories, learn from your losses, adapt where necessary, and know that every day is a new opportunity.

Is your team ready to compete today?

finding laughter and amusement amidst the pervasive gloom, doom, urgency, and strife that many seem determined to promote each day.

One of the topics I've included in speeches through the years is how our minds are programmed by what we choose to think about.

Simply, we become better and more efficient at identifying the things we set out to find.

There are positives and negatives, challenges and opportunities in most situations.

With that, some folks seem determined to be world class at finding gray clouds on the sunniest of days.

Others, on the other hand, develop an ability to find glimmers of sun on the stormiest days.

Both possess the same information, yet they envision different possible outcomes.

Recognizing the "bright side" doesn't mean a person isn't serious.

On the contrary, humor and positivity are incredibly beneficial in business – and life.

They're almost always present... if you look for them.

You gain extra points when you help others discover them as well.

Well played, Mr. Buffett. Well played.

"It takes no more time to see the good side of life than to see the bad."

» Jimmy Buffet

Dave Martin, author of The In-Store Advantage, has become one of the most prolific writers in the banking industry. His keynote presentations, seminars, and podcasts have an authenticity and humor that brings teams of all sizes and seniority levels together.

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