

## "Being brilliant is no great feat if you respect nothing."

» von Goethe

### The Hard Truth

After a recent presentation, a young manager in his early 20's approached me and asked, "What advice would you give me to be successful?"

It was such a general question that I paused and chuckled, "Like...in life...or in business?"

He said, "Well...I guess I mean when it comes to being successful in a career. What advice you would give someone my age?"

To be honest, my initial thought was to joke that if I hadn't said anything in the previous hour that resonated with him, I didn't think I could come up with anything new on the spot.

But he was a polite guy who I had noticed taking pictures of various slides during my talk.

I told him to find something that he likes...or believes he can grow to like...that is...preferably...also hard to do.

He said, "That's funny. I think most people would rather have easy jobs."

I smiled and said, "Well...don't be most people."

I went on to suggest to him that when I say find a hard job, that doesn't necessarily mean it will be hard forever.

What I mean is find something that requires putting in the work and time to develop skills and experience that many folks today will not.

### Advertising...or Looking?

I recently read an online banking publication headline touting that the banking work force has been changed forever. Sure, it's possible. It's also possible that it really hasn't. Forever is a long time.

I'd suggest that companies focused on creating and defending cultures that good people want to be a part of will still be the ones attracting employees.

These are companies who realize that great employees are developed as much as "found." They tend to hire for attitude and aptitude as much as for experience.

Companies who are serious about things like effective onboarding, ongoing training and development, and positive work cultures are those better weathering the current work force challenges.

Beyond that, I've been asking leaders recently about what it means when they say they are "looking" to hire good people.

Are they proactively looking...or are they simply advertising?

To be honest, my in-store banking DNA kicks in with that subject. We realized back in the day that the best people for our teams were not likely considering a banking career.

When he asked where to find those jobs, I told him, "Uh...everywhere. Believe me, there are jobs in the bank you work in right now that need good people willing to go through the grinding process needed to be truly exceptional at the job."

As he pondered that for a second, I told him that while he waits for the next opportunity, that he should look to make his current job harder.

When he gave me a puzzled look, I told him that if his current job is feeling easy, he should look for ways to become more productive.

There's a natural tendency to get to a level of competence and production that is acceptable to the powers that be.

Now, that's great in so much as it keeps us off radars we don't want to be on.

But basic competence may not be enough to get us onto the radars we'd like to be on.

He was a sharp young man who tied that back to a comment I made in my presentation that the best way to reach whatever job you aspire to is to strive to be amazing at the job you have now.

Regardless of our age or position, that's a pretty good approach to take. Will you this week?

Plus, most folks who may have been interested in banking were not predisposed to think of us.

We knew that the best way to find the right people was to actively, physically look for impressive folks who may not be currently looking for a job.

Our most successful recruiters (often managers and bankers) found folks from all walks of life – in other jobs and other industries – who had never thought a minute about working in a bank. Until, that is, we personally asked them.

The key was finding people displaying the kind of engagement and attitude you wanted representing your team. I think that's still true today and for all areas of our companies.

When talking about growing our businesses, I remind bankers that customers are not looking for you.

You need to be proactively looking for them. The same is true for potential team members.

In today's labor market, it might actually be easier than ever to identify the kind of dependable, engaged people you want on your team. Hint: They are showing up when others aren't.

You may be surprised how many are an introduction and friendly conversation from considering a career with you.

Give them something to think about.

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**"The beginning is the most important part of the work."**

**» Plato**



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*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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