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**"Do not wait; the time will never be 'just right.' Start where you stand and work with whatever tools you may have at your command, and better tools will be found as you go along." » George Herbert**

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## It's Not About Buildings

I was recently asked to speak at an event held at a hotel/conference center I hadn't been to before.

It sits alongside an interstate, and I believe it was part of a major hotel chain many years ago.

If I had to guess, I'd say the expansive facility is 30 to 40 years old. The decor exuded an 80s style meets Elvis's Jungle Room ambiance.

The large eagle statues in the lobby made me smile each time I walked by, though I'm not entirely sure why.

The place showed signs of past glory days. There was a large, apparently long-closed gift shop in the lobby.

I stood there imagining what that space could be besides a depressing dark void.

The guestrooms were time capsules of another era as well.

The headboard in my room took up much of the wall. It may have been the largest headboard I've ever seen.

Entering the bathroom, I chuckled thinking that there is no way those fixtures are still being manufactured.

## Expecting Success

I've been joking lately about the fact that upon reviewing my college transcript, I discovered classes I do not remember taking.

Now, in my defense, we're not talking about anything that happened this century.

David Lee Roth had the best hair in rock and roll around the time I graduated.

I joke about forgetting entire classes to make the point that while I can forget entire semesters, there are comments and brief conversations I've had with bosses and peers over the years that I remember like they were yesterday.

They made a point, intentional or not, that has resonated over many years.

One that I've recounted before was the bank president who told us that if our bank always had to offer the highest rates or charge the lowest fees to gain customers, he really didn't see why he needed us. Anyone off the street can regurgitate rates.

Another, less blunt, comment that has stuck in my mind for 30+ years was from a peer of mine who managed a car dealership in a previous career.

His behind-the-scenes stories never failed to bring laughs.

Even the oddly rounded shape of the toilet seemed from another era. Suffice it to say that my expectations for my brief stay there were not high.

Yet, I checked out the next day thinking that if I needed a room in that area again, this place would likely be my first choice.

The reasons had little to do with the dated facilities. What they lacked was compensated for by the staff... and then some.

My room was clean. I'm talking legitimately clean.

Folks who don't spend much time in hotels assume they're clean. Believe me, most really aren't.

In this place, however, the old fixtures and dated tile in the bathroom were immaculate.

Someone had actually taken time to clean things like a guest was staying there. There was no dust anywhere (and I began looking for it.)

The employees throughout the building were very nice and greeted you whenever you walked by. The restaurant and coffee shop staff were southern-friendly and more attentive than most restaurants.

I found myself smiling and reflecting on something I've preached to bankers for years.

Sure, we'd all like to have the newest and most impressive facilities in our markets.

At the end of the day, however, the customer experience is driven by our people.

Great people deliver great experiences.

What kind of experiences will you deliver today?

He also explained why the car salesmen stereotypes were so often wrong.

During one storytelling session, he said that whenever one of his salespeople made a sale, he wanted to get him or her back out there in front of another customer as soon as possible.

The line I vividly remember was, "Buddy, there's nothing more productive than a salesperson who just sold something."

When I laughed and asked why, he explained that folks who had just experienced success acted differently.

He said, "They stand taller and smile more. Heck, their handshakes get firmer. They expect to be successful and to connect with customers. It's night and day. When you can clearly picture success, you'll find it more often."

Explaining further, he said that people too often chalked up a string of success to luck.

He stressed, however, that you create your luck.

His belief was that winning streaks were more often the results of improved outlooks and the better work habits and mindsets that accompanied them.

He spoke of the importance of getting folks who were in a "slump" to understand that there are times in which you did everything right, but the stars didn't line up for you.

But if you keep your head up, they just might next time.

Or the time after that.

Picture that.

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**"Action is the foundational key to all success."**

» Pablo Picasso