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**"When opportunity comes, it's too late to prepare."  
»John Wooden**

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## Let the Prosecution Rest



Every now and again, I get a little more animated than usual when speaking about certain topics.

When an audience encourages a mini-rant with approving nods and “Mmm Hmms,” I know something is striking a nerve.

This happened recently as I was making a point to a banker group about some of the ways folks sabotage their own job satisfaction.

I joked that judging by the way some people react to negative situations, they seem to believe that they should be working for a perfect company and in a perfect world.

When folks began giving knowing grins, I asked them to consider that our companies are comprised of people.

Sure, we have technology, facilities, strategies, systems and things I'm not

## Sumo Avoidance



A recent article by Kristin Broughton for American Banker got me reflecting on an analogy I used a while back to a community banker group.

Her piece is entitled “Big banks’ other weapon in battle for deposits: Wall-to-wall marketing.”

In it, Broughton points out that analysts tend to cite technology, and not marketing, as a main competitive advantage of big banks.

Yet, there is a case to be made that the large banks, using huge budgets to blanket markets, are increasing brand recognition/preference and growing their deposits at faster rates than their smaller bank competitors are.

When addressing that community banker group, I projected a picture of a massive sumo wrestler behind me and said, “I’m not afraid of this guy. I would gladly take

smart enough to understand, much less explain.

However, at the core of all of this are people. And while it may come as a shock to some... even folks with the purest of hearts and best of intentions are imperfect.

We humans make mistakes.

Yet, there seem to be many who assume that anytime something doesn't go the way they would like, it must have been from an intentional act or someone's incompetence.

Someone is to blame!

As silly as that may sound, almost everyone I ask can think of places or people they have worked with who seem to believe the world is conspiring against them.

That's pretty funny. It would be funnier if it did not come with real world implications.

When I make this point, I also make clear that I fully believe that people should be accountable for missteps and that we absolutely have expectations of competence in the workplace.

That said, folks who seem to go around constantly "building cases" against team members, support staff, supervisors, and even customers create toxic environments.

People who constantly look for reasons to have their feelings hurt, or for others to blame when things don't go their way,

him head-on and destroy him (pause)...in tennis."

As folks chuckled, I continued, "Oh, I'm serious. I'd make a sumo wrestler wish he had eaten a few more salads if he ever got on a tennis court with me. It would be drop shot...lob...repeat."

I then made it clear that there is no way I would ever want to, you know... wrestle that dude.

My point is that we should do our best to avoid competing entirely on bigger or stronger competitors' fields of choice.

If your business development approaches are simply much smaller mirror images of theirs, your chances of differentiating yourself are not great.

In recent years, online marketing and social media have helped expand even smaller players' potential reach.

That said, I remind folks that the most powerful business development "apps" they carry around on their person are not on their smartphones.

They are their business cards.

I'd take a smile, handshake, chat and business card exchange over any TV, radio, or online ad. Most leaders tend to agree.

Yet, far too few are consistently reinforcing those practices to their teams. We talk about it more than execute it.

Maybe your name is not on a professional sports venue. But, whose

tend to get efficient at finding what they're looking for.

That is not a particularly productive skill to develop, however.

Humans are imperfect. Therefore, companies are imperfect as well.

The good ones (both humans and companies) strive to do the right things by others, treat those around them with respect, and take personal responsibility for making things right if - and when - they go wrong.

Strive to be one of the good ones today.

brand is most visible at your local parks, fields, gyms, etc.?

There are ways to "blanket" small markets (and sub-markets) with branding that do not involve mega-budgets.

What they do require is creativity, legwork, and the will to compete. Marketing is a contact sport.

Pick your playing fields wisely...but get in the game.

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**"Failure is a bruise, not a tattoo."**

»Jon Sinclair



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