

LONE STAR

BUSINESS JOURNAL

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION FOR
TEXAS CEOs & FOUNDERS

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Hello Friends And Valued USM Clients,

Welcome to the maiden voyage of the *Lone Star Business Journal*. We crafted this magazine for the visionary CEOs and pioneering Founders at the forefront of Texas's remarkable evolution into a global economic powerhouse. In these pages, we share insights drawn from the minds of icons such as Emmitt Smith, Robert Herjavec, and more. We combine them with case studies highlighting Texas businesses harnessing technology to outpace their competition, turbocharge their growth, and navigate the perils of cybercrime, compliance, and talent retention.

In the wake of the recent ransomware siege on the City of Dallas this past May, we find ourselves thrust into a new era where robust cybersecurity is no longer a luxury but instead a critical survival tool in the business landscape.

Established in 2010 to help Texas business leaders make intelligent technology investments that help make their companies fast, agile, and secure, our organization is committed to cultivating a fortified business community well-equipped to ward off these cyber threats. Therefore, we are thrilled to announce a strategic partnership with the Allen Economic Development Corporation to orchestrate an exclusive Cybersecurity Workshop specifically tailored for the business leaders of Texas.



We have arranged for a Special Agent from the FBI's cybercrime division to share firsthand accounts of Texas businesses responding to active cyber threats. He will also share the ensuing repercussions and explain how and why organizations across Texas are in the crosshairs of global cybercrime syndicates. Furthermore, you'll learn how the FBI and other federal entities can help bolster your corporation's cyber defenses. We will also outline six crucial controls that you, as the executive leader, must ensure are in place within your organization. These controls will help prepare your company to repel the coming wave of AI-enhanced cyberattacks.

Given the private nature of this discourse, we are capping our invitation list to a select 10–12 companies. If you wish to be part of this elite roster, please visit our website at <https://www.usmtechnology.com/fbi> and submit your application for consideration.

With that, I hope you all had a safe and fun Fourth of July weekend, and I hope you enjoy the magazine as much as my team and I have enjoyed creating it. ■

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PHOTOGRAPHY All images sourced
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A CHAMPION
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MEET EMMITT!





Top 10 Rules For Salespeople With Sales Expert **Robin Robins**

YOU HAVE TO BE SOLD BEFORE YOU CAN SELL.



If you're not excited and deeply passionate about what you sell, figure out how to get excited—or find another job. Talk to someone who is passionate about a hobby and they'll "sell" you on why it's so exciting. They don't need a script or clever closes. They sell because of their sheer passion for what they do. If you are not as convinced about what you do, then make it better so you *can* be passionate.

ALWAYS BE THE MOST PROFESSIONAL PERSON IN THE ROOM.

Dress modestly and professionally. Don't get angry or defensive. Say "please" and "thank you." If you say you're going to do something, then *do it*. Be prepared, professional, and have a process. Too many salespeople are casual about their performance. They show up late, unprepared, and unscripted, and they are not ready to close. No pro would ever show up that way to their "game," be it a professional athlete or actor.

TRUE SALES PROS NEVER WING IT.

They follow a highly strategic, planned-out process. There aren't 10, 20, or even two "best ways" to do something. Only one. Find it and repeat it.

NEVER TRASH THE COMPETITION.

If you have to bad-mouth a specific competitor to win a sale instead of selling on *your* merits, you're pitiful and unprofessional. We often get that from our competition at TMT. If someone has to sell you on their services by

telling you how bad a competitor is, you should walk away. Sell on *your* merits . . . and if you don't have any, *get some*.

 **SENDING EMAILS AND CONNECTING WITH PEOPLE ON SOCIAL MEDIA ARE **NOT** PRODUCTIVE PROSPECTING ACTIVITIES.**

You get *zero* points unless a call is tied to it. Outside salespeople are called “outside” salespeople for a reason. You're supposed to get outside of the office to go meet with check writers. COVID-19 is over. Get out to networking events, meetings, and conferences. Network. Visit people. Conduct canvassing. That's your job if you're a hunter. NEVER leave a meeting with a prospect without a SCHEDULED next action. Don't waste your time. If they aren't interested, have a polite and professional way to find out — then walk away to find a better, more interested prospect who is ready to buy. You must maintain control of the process, or you'll waste your time.

 **DON'T SELL TO PEOPLE WHO ONLY HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO SAY “NO.”**

It's difficult enough to deal with the *willingness* to buy; don't handicap yourself with their inability to buy, too. How do you know if they have the authority to buy? Who influences their decisions? Who is truly calling the shots? Scripts and practice help, but you must have a willingness to ask tough questions. Are you the fool or the favorite? Ask, “Why do you want to do business with us?”

 **ACTIVITIES **DRIVE** RESULTS, PERIOD.**

Don't whine and complain about the competition, the market, your customers, the leads you're getting, etc. IF you're doing enough of the right activities, you will succeed. You have to make up in numbers what you lack in skill. Following from the above, the weaker and more underdeveloped your skills are, the more you'll need to do. Repetition of correct fundamentals develops skill. If you're not willing to put in the work and do the activities required to succeed, you shouldn't be in sales.

 **FOLLOW UP FAST ON **EVERY** LEAD.**

The faster you respond, the better your chances are of getting the deal. Make sure you don't give up on leads too quickly, and call at least 5–7 times in addition to emailing, mailing, and social messaging before you put them into drip marketing.

If you want to be successful in sales, you should work MORE than 9 to 5. You control your income—and your raise becomes effective the minute you work more. Also, as the saying goes, “Learners are earners.” What

Ask Yourself, What Would Robin Do (WWRD)?

“THE FASTER YOU RESPOND, THE BETTER YOUR CHANCES ARE OF GETTING THE DEAL.”

book are you reading? What method are you studying to be at the top of your game? If you see yourself as a professional, you are constantly sharpening your skills.

 **HAVE SOMETHING INTERESTING TO SHARE.**

Why *should* someone take your call? Your meeting? If all you can offer is to pitch a product or talk to someone about their “needs,” you don't deserve a callback or a meeting. Great salespeople are fountains of knowledge and true consultants. They know things others don't. When you meet with a true professional who knows their industry, product, and client, they can tell you things that are truly valuable. Bottom line, if you want more prospects to meet with you, do a better job at selling them on what THEY will get from the meeting.

 **INVITE THE “NO.”**

Your job is not alchemy, turning a cold rock into a gold nugget. Instead, keep prospecting to find the ones who *want* what you're selling. Endlessly following up on people who were too polite to tell you “no” to your face is a giant waste of time. Let your marketing do the drip marketing for you, and put your efforts into finding someone who is ready to buy now.

Whining and complaining have *never* solved a problem, closed a sale, or accomplished anything productive. Grow up. Nobody is impressed by how good your excuses are. ■

Robin Robins is the IT industry's most in-demand marketing consultant, sales trainer, and direct response marketing consultant who specializes in developing strategic marketing, sales and lead generation systems for MSPs, VARs and IT services companies.

Robin is the Founder of Technology Marketing Toolkit, MSP Success Magazine and Big Red Media. To date, her organization has coached, trained and consulted with over 10,000 IT business owners from all over the US and in 37 different countries. She currently runs the largest C-level peer group in the IT services channel for MSPs and her annual event, the IT Sales and Marketing Boot Camp, attracts over 1,600 attendees every year and is sponsored by the IT industry's leading vendors.

This vast experience has given Robin a broad knowledge of hundreds of marketing and sales tactics used by some of the most successful, sales driven organizations in the world.

Stop Calling It A Labor Shortage! It Is A Turnover Crisis.

BY JOHN DIJULIUS



THE STATISTICS ARE ALARMING

A record-setting 10.1 million jobs opened in the United States last year. About 11.5 million workers quit just in the second quarter of 2021. Forty-one percent of the global workforce would consider leaving their current employer within the next year. Fifty-four percent of Gen Z are considering quitting.

The “Great Resignation” is a mass, voluntary exodus from the workforce. It is here, and it is quite real. Turnover is nothing new and neither are corporate retention strategies. But the Great Resignation and extreme turnover happening today across industries is a different phenomenon that requires a different approach. The Great Resignation caught so many business leaders flat-footed.

WHAT IS FUELING THE GREAT RESIGNATION?

There are numerous reasons, most originating from the pandemic that started in early 2020. According to a LinkedIn survey, 74% of respondents said the time spent at home caused them to rethink their current work situation. More than 50% cited stress and burnout in their job as a reason for looking elsewhere. Others did not like how their employer had treated them over the last 18 months, from a lack of genuine concern to employees being forced to take concessions while senior executives didn’t. The work-from-home (WFH) dilemma opened Pandora’s box for

many employees and has become a contentious issue for many organizations. And finally, yes, the increase in unemployment benefits has caused a lack of urgency for many to return to the workforce. We saw a booming economy during the last decade, which always results in two things: Most businesses start losing focus on the customer and employee experience, and businesses need to stop thinking Ping Pong tables and Friday happy hours and create a strong company culture instead.

A PROFESSIONAL AWAKENING

For so many, the pandemic has had the same effect on people as those who survive near-death experiences. It has caused employees to reevaluate their professional careers, not only what they want but also what they aren’t willing to tolerate anymore. This professional awakening has caught a lot of leaders and companies flat-footed. However, too many leaders are using the Great Resignation as a crutch. A significant percentage of people who have quit over the last 15 months did so as a result of poor company culture, where leaders are solely focused on productivity and bottom-line profits.

I have seen firsthand that the companies with the strongest company culture, long before the pandemic, are significantly less affected by the so-called labor shortage. And the organizations that churned and burned their team members or only paid lip service to support a “great” workplace culture are the ones hit the hardest by the employee turnover.

LEADERSHIP EPIPHANY

“You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.”

You have probably heard that quote hundreds of times. I know I have repeated it at least that many times to my three boys, at new-employee orientations, and to any young person who asks me for advice. The point of this quote is that each of us is responsible for whom we allow in our circle of friends. We must audit the people around us to make sure we are spending time with people who make us better, inspire us, and encourage us in all areas of our lives.



Has it hit you yet, the “aha!” moment? My leadership epiphany is that the employees who work in our organizations do not get to choose with whom they work or with whom they spend more time in their lives than their family and friends. As leaders, we choose for them. Then we complain that we have good employees, but their morale has gone down, and they are not performing like they once were. We have good employees quitting our company. Then we blame it on the Great Resignation or the younger generation’s lack of work ethic, or we claim all they care about is money.

Wrong, wrong, wrong. Great employees hate working with lousy employees. When leaders compromise on whom they hire and whom they allow to stay, they pollute their workplace culture. Every leader is responsible for the average of the five coworkers their employees spend the most time with. Audit that!

I disagree with the way this old adage is worded: “Employees don’t quit companies, they quit leaders.” While that is true, it is incomplete. The correct way to say it is: “Employees don’t quit companies, they quit people.” Employees quit because of the people they work with (coworkers and leaders).

“You can’t hire your way out of a bad culture.”

THE 2 BIGGEST MISTAKES COMPANIES ARE MAKING RIGHT NOW

-  Hiring to Fill Vacant Positions with Just Anyone
-  Keeping Poor Performers

Too many companies are trying to solve this staff shortage issue by hiring people as fast as they can to just fill positions and keeping employees with bad attitudes. Both are huge mistakes. “A” players hate working with “B” and “C” players. Unengaged employees are like squatters taking up space and sucking the energy out of your organization. The No. 1 priority for businesses today needs to be focusing on keeping their top talent and improving their internal culture.

The businesses with the highest engaged employees enjoy:

- 81% less absenteeism

- 33% less turnover
- 10% increase in customer loyalty/engagement
- 23% more profitability

“Stop trying to find great employees. Focus on becoming the business great employees find.”

Businesses need to stop treating their employees like children. Leadership needs to be about helping people reach their potential in performance, not just managing them if they break policy or screw up. High performers need innovation; innovators need autonomy. Don’t let one poor employee ruin your organization’s freedom and flexibility. Employee freedom means they can take a lot of risks and fail. Risk-taking breeds innovation.

“Days of lighting fires under people are over. Days of lighting fires inside people are here.” ■

10 WAYS TO BUILD THE CULTURE EMPLOYEES WILL LOVE

1. Love your employees and show it.
2. Do not compromise whom you hire or keep.
3. Prioritize employees’ mental health.
4. Measure employee engagement quarterly (surveys).
5. Improve the quality of your employees’ lives.
6. Stop policing them for screwing up and start inspiring them to reach their fullest potential.
7. If your team is virtual, increase your one-on-one meetings.
8. Constantly share vision, direction, and what is in it for them.
9. Demonstrate you genuinely care for your employees.
10. Systematize leaders catching employees doing something right.

John Dijulius, best-selling author of five customer service books, is the chief revolution officer of The Dijulius Group and works with the top brands in the world on customer and employee experience.



Pink Goldfish 2.0: 8 Unconventional Strategies For Captivating Your Customers And Crushing Your Competition

BY DAVID RENDALL

What would it be worth if prospects and customers truly saw your company as unique? In her book, *Different: Escaping the Competitive Herd*, Harvard Business School marketing professor Youngme Moon argues that “the ability to compete is dependent upon the ability to differentiate from competitors.”

However, she goes on to say that “the number of companies who are truly able to achieve competitive separation is depressingly small.” This is because companies tend to define their strengths and weaknesses using the same measurements and standards as their competitors. This leads to homogeneity, not differentiation.

When everyone is trying to build on the same strengths and eliminate the same weaknesses, all companies start to look the same. Over time, the entire industry looks the same, feels the same, and sounds the same. There are no differences. Nothing distinguishes one brand from another.

SO, HOW CAN YOU CREATE ONE OF THE FEW ORGANIZATIONS THAT BECOMES EXTRAORDINARY?

Maybe you could practice organizational *kintsugi*. In the 15th century, the Japanese Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa broke his favorite tea bowl. When he tried to get it fixed, he was unhappy with the way it was done. So, he gave the craftsmen new instructions. He asked them to highlight the cracks instead of trying to hide them. On the second attempt, lacquer and gold were used to meticulously fill the jagged seams. The result became the art of *kintsugi*, which highlights the broken as more beautiful than the pristine.

This is the foundation of our differentiation strategy. We believe companies can separate themselves from their competitors by illuminating imperfections instead of eliminating them.

A “pink goldfish” is a company that embraces this unconventional approach to differentiation. We gathered more than 300 examples and distilled them into a simple eight-part framework, which starts with flaunting.

1. FLAUNTING

Flaunt means to parade without shame. Flaunting is being unashamed and unapologetic about your organization’s flaws. You take pride in your organization’s faults. You emphasize them, accentuate them, feature them, highlight them, call attention to them, and openly display them. You definitely aren’t trying to hide them or fix them.

Alt Hotels is a great example of flaunting. They created a campaign that brags about all the things you won’t find at their hotels. It’s called We Do Less. Each of the five ads focuses on what they don’t do, and what they do instead:

We **don’t** have a minibar.

We **don’t** have a concierge.

We **don’t** have a pool.

We **don’t** offer room service.

We **don’t** have a bellman.

We **do** have a hip lounge.

We **do** have an app with all the hot spots.

We **do** have a pool table.

We **do** have fresh grab-and-go meals.

We **do** have a versatile, helpful staff.



Flaunting is the foundation. You can't implement any of the next seven strategies if you are unwilling to practice flaunting.

2. LOPSIDING

Lopsiding is about being unbalanced, imperfect, unstable, and odd. Lopsiding involves amplifying, not reducing, your brand's flaws. We want you to expand them, magnify them, increase them, turn them up, exaggerate them, and supersize them.

This is what Hardee's (or Carl's Jr., if you live on the West Coast) did with the Thickburger. When other fast-food companies were trying to create healthier options, Hardee's offered the unhealthiest option. And customers loved it.

3. ANTAGONIZING

Antagonizing is about polarizing, alienating, repelling, and taunting. We want you to deliberately exasperate, irritate, provoke, aggravate, and instigate hostility. Go out of your way to rub people the wrong way. Try to earn a few more one-star reviews on Amazon or Yelp. Tell your employees to increase the number of complaints. Ring a bell in the office every time you get a nasty email. Try it. The more some people hate you, the more other people will love you.

The Alamo Drafthouse Cinema antagonizes when they kick out customers who talk or text during movies. Search YouTube for the angry voicemail a customer sent after being expelled. Alamo turned it into a PSA, warning people not to talk or text in Alamo theaters.

4. WITHHOLDING

Withholding is about limitations, restrictions, boundaries, and constraints. Withholding involves offering fewer options, fewer locations, fewer features, fewer products, fewer services, fewer hours, fewer perks, and fewer discounts. This is about deliberately and relentlessly shrinking the things everyone else is expanding. It is purposefully doing less of what is considered normal by others. By reducing options or completely eliminating them, brands can stand out and differentiate themselves.

Chick-fil-A withholds by being closed on Sundays, not serving burgers, and rejecting 97% of franchise applications.

5. SWERVING

As an example of withholding, we aren't going to explain swerving.

6. OPPOSING

Opposing is doing the exact opposite of what others are doing. Opposing brands are unlike other brands. They are contradictory. They refuse to give in, yield, submit, and surrender to the pressure to conform.

REI opposes when they close their stores and website on Black Friday, the biggest shopping day of the year.

7. MICRO-WEIRDING

As we collected examples for pink goldfish companies, we had some that didn't fit into any specific category but were too good to leave out. So, we created another category, micro-weirding. The Magic Castle Hotel's free popsicle hotline is micro-weird.

8. EXPOSING

Exposing is about transparency. Most companies try to hide their flaws. They market themselves as perfect and flawless. But prospects know that no company is perfect. People are looking for a company that will be honest about their imperfections.

Nebraska's new tourism campaign, which they admit that their state "isn't for everyone," is a great example of exposing.

To help you remember the eight steps, we decided to create an acronym:

F launting	S werving
L opsiding	O pposing
A ntagonizing	M icro-Weirding
W ithholding	E xposing

FLAWSOME is a combination of FLAWS and AWESOME. We believe your company's flaws are what make it awesome. Are you ready to start flaunting your organization's imperfections?! ■

David Rendall, our "Expert In Resident," has spent the last 20 years speaking on every inhabited continent. Some of his clients include the U.S. Air Force, the Australian government, and Fortune 500 companies such as Microsoft, AT&T, and Fannie Mae among others. His credits also include being a leadership professor, stand-up comedian, and managing nonprofit enterprises that provided employment for people with disabilities. David's educational accomplishments include a doctorate of management in organizational leadership and a graduate degree in psychology. To top that off, he is the author of four books. To find out more about David's coaching, keynotes, and workshops, visit him at DRendall.com.



12 PRINCIPLES THAT MAKE A CHAMPION

On And Off The Field

FEATURE STORY WITH EMMITT SMITH

Emmitt Smith is best known as the NFL's all-time leading rusher, a Pro Football Hall of Famer, and a *Dancing with the Stars* champion. But he's also a respected entrepreneur, sought-after speaker, best-selling author, and one of the most valuable personal brands in the sports-entertainment field. As chairman of E. Smith Legacy Holdings, a successful real estate development firm that is recognized as a leading bridge builder in Texas, he oversees real estate, construction, development, and investments. He also leads a team of talented individuals who oversee other ventures including authentication technology, a marketing firm, a nonprofit, and an entertainment platform.

Read on to discover the principles Emmitt revealed, the secrets he attributes to his success, and what drives him as an entrepreneur and a human being.



1. DARE TO DREAM AND TURN THOSE DREAMS INTO GOALS.

When Emmitt was just 7 years old, he watched a Dallas Cowboys football game with his father. That day, he turned to his father and said, "Pop, one day, I'm going to play professional football, and I'm going to play for the Dallas Cowboys." He also dreamed of one day living in a home very different from where he grew up and building homes for people so they could have nice homes, too. Those early visions were the catalysts that fueled his dreams. But Emmitt stressed, "A dream is only a dream until you write it down. Then it's a goal. Goal setting is important because it helps you map out your life."





**...WHEN YOU GO
ALL-IN ON SOMETHING
YOU'RE PASSIONATE
ABOUT, THAT
MEANS YOU GO AT IT
RELENTLESSLY...**



2. DON'T LET FEAR CRIPPLE YOU.

As entrepreneurs, we all experience fear, especially the first time something happens. Don't let it paralyze you. Get back up IMMEDIATELY, be courageous, and meet your fear head on. Emmitt recalled one time when he was 10, during his first day of practice, playing with kids who were two years older than him. The kids were bigger, faster, and stronger, and hit a lot harder. During his first drill, he was hit so hard by a kid named Billy that he was in pain and afraid to continue. He said to his coach, "No, Coach. I don't want to do it again. I'm thinking about quitting." But his coach wouldn't allow him to sit in fear, telling him to do it again. By immediately getting back in the saddle, he was able to make a course correction, which allowed him to have a better experience the next time and avoid getting hit.

"I reluctantly got back in line, and over there, Billy is smiling at me," Emmitt recalled. "My lips started to quiver a little bit. Fear overcame me for the first time in my life. I'd never been hit that hard before. As young entrepreneurs, sometimes we step into things we've never experienced before, and if we don't have that type of experience or know someone who has that experience, guess what? We're still on the sideline. We find ourselves at the back of the line trying to avoid Billy because he hits very hard instead of facing Billy and facing your fears. Don't ever let fear paralyze you.

"The beautiful thing about getting back up and getting back in line right then and there [was] I didn't have a whole lot of time to think about it, and so I was able to learn a valuable lesson—to avoid all contact."



3. ADAPT AND CHANGE.

During his career, Emmitt had to overcome adversity and learn to adapt. As a kid, everything he saw on television was about the quarterback, so he wanted to be a quarterback, but his coaches thought differently. Recalls Emmitt, "I went out for football when I turned 8 years old. My very first day of practice, I come out, and the coach says, 'What position do you want to play?' I said, 'I want to play quarterback.' He said, 'Why?' I said, 'I want to be just like Roger Staubach. I want to wear number 12. A quarterback touches the ball more than everybody on the football field. He gets paid more than everybody on the football field, and all the ladies love the quarterback.' The next year, another coach asked me the same question. I answered it the same way. He asked me this one thing. He said, 'Have you ever thought about playing another position?' I said, 'No, why would I even think about playing another position? Did you not see me play quarterback last year?' He said, 'Yes, that's the reason why I want to put you back here and let you run the football, because you cannot throw.' I learned the word change. Change is going to happen in everybody's life. That was my first time being introduced to change. I could have resisted the change, but I was

focused on just playing the game. I had my whole life ahead of me, so my mind was open to the possibility of something else."



4. BUILD A TEAM OF ROLE MODELS, MENTORS, AND COACHES.

Never be afraid to seek guidance. Find people who are a level up from where you are now to help you through challenges. And seek out coaches to help you see what you can't see yourself. One of Emmitt's mentors is Roger Staubach, former quarterback for the Dallas Cowboys, who started a real estate company during the off-season. Emmitt received guidance from Staubach about starting a business. "We want things to be natural and as easy as possible, but when faced with a challenge head-on, surround yourself with people who have experience of where you want to go," he said. Emmitt credits his coach for helping him realize he was better suited to play running back. "I absolutely love coaches," Emmitt said. "They see the best in all of us, even when we don't see it in ourselves. When you have great coaches, they bring out the best in you."



5. SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES THAT LINE UP WITH YOUR PASSIONS AND PRINCIPLES.

When it comes to deciding which new business challenges to put his energy into, Emmitt said his main criteria are whether he's passionate about it and whether there is an opportunity for him to effect change in the most positive way. "For me, it's about what I've been called to do," Emmitt said. "If there's an opportunity to effect change in an area that's lacking, that I'm passionate about, I absolutely go all-in on it. Because when you go all-in on something you're passionate about, that means you go at it relentlessly, and at the first bit of challenge, you're not going to let it push you down. You're going to keep fighting. If I have the resources around me to address it, then I would attack it. If I don't, then I'm going to wait and be patient until I do run across the resources. That's why I say you just keep moving instead of being on the sideline. You keep doing what you're doing and keep your eyes open and ears open to those types of opportunities."



6. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY AND STAY SHARP.

To manage the intense pressure of having people depending on him, Emmitt focuses on creating quality habits. "To earn the trust of your teammates and your peers, that's when it's truly rewarding," Emmitt said. "And the work you're putting in pays off. You don't stay out all night knowing others are counting on you. You make those personal sacrifices of yourself for the benefit of the entire team. That's why the quarterbacks get the credit. When they win games, they get the credit. The bad part of it is when they don't win, they also get the credit. Quarterbacks take on that responsibility. It is my job to do the

same thing as a player and as a leader to make sure I'm doing my part and trying to help others do their part as well."



7. DON'T BECOME COMPLACENT AND STAY COMMITTED TO YOUR GOALS.

To maximize his potential, Emmitt never lets himself be satisfied. He stays focused on constantly improving himself and his performance. It's this wholehearted commitment to his goals and performing consistently day after day that has made it possible for him to turn his dreams into reality. "When you win and you are successful at whatever it is you're trying to do, you want to be selfish about it because you want to stay at the pinnacle," Emmitt said. "You want to remain hungry because Dwight Thomas [his high school football coach] told us, 'Never become satisfied with anything. Because the day you do, the growing stops.' And that's been my philosophy ever since. People asked me, 'How did you become an all-time leading rusher?' Well, you've got to be consistent. You've got to be available. You can't be missing work. You can't be cutting things and taking shortcuts. There aren't any shortcuts in life. Either you're going to get on the grind or you're not. And before you know it, it's no longer a grind. It becomes fun because you're building things that are sustainable. The things I'm talking about right now were the building blocks to where my life was taking me without my even knowing it. They talk about 10,000 hours. Well, I have 10,000 hours in sports, and I'm working on another 20,000 hours in business. And I'm going to do it until I go into the grave because I'm going to maximize every ounce of talent I have to be the very best version of myself."



8. GIVE FREELY TO OTHERS.

As you grow more successful, share your success and knowledge with others. After being named the Gatorade National Football Player of the Year his senior year in high school, Emmitt was awarded an all-expense paid trip and two tickets to watch his first Super Bowl at the Rose Bowl in California.

He took his best friend, Johnny Nichols. While at the game, he told Johnny that one day he was going to play at the Rose Bowl. Six years later, he played his first Super Bowl at the Rose

Bowl, and his friend Johnny was in the stands watching him. "Success is there to be shared, not to be reserved for just you," Emmitt said. "It's enjoyable when you have others to share it with. Knowledge is to be shared, not just remain in your head, but to be taken out and given to others freely. The reason why is because what you know, the nuances, others might not get it. And what's for you is for you. And what's for someone else to do with that information is for them. They'll figure it out. But to help another one move along their path is all we've been called to do."



9. MAINTAIN AN ATTITUDE OF HUMILITY.

Remember your humble beginnings and, despite your success, never see yourself as better than others. Also, command attention and respect not by demanding it, but by earning it. "My mother always told me, 'Son, treat people with respect and command respect at the same time,'" Emmitt said. "Humility is one thing I've been able to home in on throughout the entire process. I try not to project myself upon others and try to carry myself as a normal approachable person versus walking around with this halo. I allow people to treat me the way they want to treat me or the way they believe I should be treated. I don't walk around with this expectation that someone is going to treat me special because of what I've done."





10. NEVER FORGET IT TAKES A TEAM TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

No one becomes successful alone. Never forget the importance of recognizing your team. After a game in his freshman year in high school in which Emmitt had eight carries, rushed for 245 yards, and scored two touchdowns—all in the first half—his coach allowed him to speak to the press. As Emmitt answered the press's questions about the game, his answers were all focused on what he had contributed to the game without mentioning his teammates. "Afterward, the coach put his arm around me, walked me back into the locker room, and he said, 'Listen, son, every chance you get, you share the spotlight with those five guys up front. You didn't block for yourself. You didn't hand the ball to yourself. And you definitely didn't throw the ball to yourself.'" The next practice, when Emmitt took off running to the line of scrimmage, his entire offensive line laid down and he got hit by the entire defensive line. "I got up saying, 'Coach, I got it, I got it, I got it,'" Emmitt said. "It was a lesson in humility. No one, I repeat, no one becomes successful by themselves. It takes everybody to be successful in every organization. Even at home, nobody can shoulder all this weight by themselves. I could not have become the all-time leader in rushing without the great wall of Dallas in front of me . . . I don't care what anybody says, no one is successful by themselves. The people who are not the most recognizable in the organization are the ones doing a lot of the grunt work behind the scenes to make you and me look good. Our marketing teams are taking the skill sets we offer and the service we offer and make it and prop it up and sell it to the community."



11. ENGAGE IN SELF-REFLECTION TO GET BETTER.

To get to the level of success you want to get to, take time to analyze everything after losses, setbacks, or mistakes. Look at what is working and what isn't working. Ask hard questions such as if you executed your game plan and whether your competition is in better shape than your organization. When Emmitt was a freshman in high school, he was one of two freshmen allowed to play varsity. On his first day of practice, when they handed him the ball, he fumbled three straight times in a row. The offense coordinator grabbed him by the face mask, shook his mask, and told him he would never amount to anything if he couldn't take care of the football because the football was the most important thing on the field. "He made me feel small," Emmitt said. "I was so mad and hot that the next time, I ran through the cornerback so bad, I think I broke his collarbone. I was mad, but I was challenged to a level that made me start to focus on the things that were most important . . . If you

want to become better at whatever it is you're trying to do as an organization, you must do self-reflection. You have to be able to analyze not only the good but also the bad. As a team, as football players, and as business owners, when we win, everybody is excited, and everybody is giving high-fives. But when we lose, everybody's disappointed. Are you taking time to analyze the things that cost [you] the game?"



12. DESIGN YOUR ENVIRONMENT TO DISSUADE NEGATIVITY.

Pessimists are all around you. Protect your environment from negativity by hanging around positive people. Avoid people who have not experienced the success you're looking to achieve and don't understand your journey. While everybody has an opinion, they don't necessarily have a clue about what you're experiencing in your business. Emmitt likened it to asking a high school coach who doesn't have any experience with pro football. Instead, find someone who has achieved what you want to achieve and is willing to share their knowledge with you. "You are a product of your environment," Emmitt said. "You absolutely must set up boundaries in every aspect of life. Positive-thinking people inspire others to be positive-thinking people, too. That's not to say we all have to think the same, but if you challenge me on a thought so I can find revelation within that thought, and it works both ways, we are going to be cool all day, every day, because you have something to give me and I have something to give you instead of someone just sucking all the energy out of you. Also, find people who have gone places you have not gone and speak to those folks who understand what it's like to go through that process. Naysayers are everywhere . . . Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook have naysayers all over them. If you really want someone who's been there, done it, and got a T-shirt for it, you find that person and then you ask all the questions you want to ask. If they're willing to share it, they're willing to share. If they're not, find somebody else who's been there because someone on this planet has been where you are trying to go."

These are principles Emmitt lives day in, day out. He says when you are doing things on a repetitive basis, it becomes ingrained in you. "Make whatever it is that you're doing become your lifestyle. Make your habits, quality habits, not just any habit. And when you get done, you will look up and look back on your journey, and you will see the process and the things you put into becoming successful. As legendary coach Paul Bryant said, 'If you believe in yourself and have dedication and pride, you will be a winner.' The price of victory is high, but so are the rewards." ■



Recuro Puts The Focus On HealthCare With IT Support From USM Technology

BY PAUL DONNELLY, DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY



I truly do believe that what we're doing at Recuro is changing the healthcare industry, improving patient outcomes, and revolutionizing preventative healthcare.

We rely on genetic testing, telehealth technology, and a strong platform to have an impact on patients all over the United States. However, when I joined eighteen months years ago, we had frustrating challenges standing in our way and limiting our impact. As the Director of Technology, I work with technically savvy colleagues every day, but even we were feeling stuck with our current technology ecosystem.

I remember sitting down at a virtual meeting and trying to open a shared file, but because of our acquisition-based growth strategy, people in that meeting were using three different instances of Microsoft 365, and only a handful of people were able to view the file. We were stopped in our tracks because of a technical blip that was as basic as could be, and at that moment, I knew it was time for a major change.

As much as I wanted to focus on Recuro's telehealth platform and our patient offerings, I made the difficult decision to slow down and get our basics right with the help of USM Technology. Moving all of Recuro to the same infrastructure and streamlining our ability to communicate, collaborate, and problem solve changed how we were able to do business. I went from getting frustration-filled texts and calls from my teams when something wasn't working right to getting messages that credited USM Technology with solving our IT issues quickly and efficiently.

Since we started working with them, the team at USM Technology has been professional, friendly, and incredibly knowledgeable. As Recuro continues to grow and our

list of acquisitions gets longer, I no longer spend hours of my day trying to put out IT-related fires and ensuring all of my teams can talk to each other from different locations. I know that USM Technology understands our business strategy, prioritizes our IT needs, and navigates system implementations with ease. They partnered with us to remove barriers that felt trivial but were directly impeding our ability to do business. Now our full-service IT help desk, USM Technology is one of the best business investments we have made during my time at Recuro.

Acquisitions can be challenging and frustrating, but when they are done well, they can enhance business offerings like no other strategic opportunity. For business leaders who are struggling to manage acquisition-related growth, my #1 piece of advice is to work with an organization like USM Technology that can align the foundational aspects of acquisitions. Taking the time to integrate IT infrastructure and do it right the first time will always be worth the investment. Trust me, we didn't prioritize it at first and we paid for it.

Not only do I get to spend my time where my personal skill set is most valuable but my staff is happier, our company culture is more unified, and our users receive better customer support. We used to feel like multiple companies competing for resources, but now, Recuro is as cohesive as it has ever been, thrilled to continue growing and ready to take on the healthcare industry's biggest challenges. None of this would be our reality without USM Technology's support and expertise. They transformed our business and improved the impact we have across the board. ■



Invitation Only: Cybersecurity Roundtable For Texas Business Leaders

The Allen Economic Development Corporation and USM Technology are proud to sponsor an Exclusive Executive Cybersecurity Roundtable. We are bringing together Texas Business Leaders and one of the nation's leading cybersecurity experts from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to have a meaningful conversation about ways Texas Business Leaders can fight back against cybercrime.

Attendees Will Learn:

- ✔ How AI-Enhanced cyberattacks are making hackers exponentially more effective.
- ✔ 6 practical steps business leaders must take right now to prepare for a cyberattack.
- ✔ What business leaders must do & not do during a cyberattack.
- ✔ 5 ways federal & local authorities can help you prepare for & recover from a cyberattack.

Invitation Only: Exclusive FBI Roundtable

Allen, Texas – 8 am to 10 am on Thursday, September 14th, 2023

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