

ANOTHER INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL MARSHALL  
WHO IS ALSO KNOWN AS “THE BUSINESS DOCTOR”  
FROM [www.AskTheBusinessDoctor.com](http://www.AskTheBusinessDoctor.com)

This interview covers some very insightful topics.

***Interviewer:***

We know that you have a passion for business development utilizing extensive experience, studies, and skills.

You have stated previously that the libraries of information on the website of [www.AskTheBusinessDoctor.com](http://www.AskTheBusinessDoctor.com) have a low but modest price to help cover the costs of the website and that as you stated “You only get better if you pay for it”.

But don’t you ever just help people with business development on a volunteer basis.

***Response:***

I get some pretty unusual requests and comments for free information.

One executive recruiter contacted me to discuss his challenge of working with mid to lower level management corporate staff in clients when presenting skilled potential candidates.

The recruiter explained how he is frustrated with the situation of management turning down excellent qualified candidates because the candidate’s skills are above those of the management who are doing the hiring.

They are uncomfortable with hiring those with higher skills sets than their own.

I advised the recruiter to read the library that is on the website that covers what I call “The Rule of 10”.

This can be found in Group VIII and is titled “The Importance Of Training At All Levels To Prevent Businesses From Falling Into The Horrible Business Situation.”

This “Rule of 10” is fundamentally the unfortunate and unhealthy mind set that on a skill level of 1 to 10 with 10 being highest, management staff can tend to hire those with lower skills than the ir own which causes a spiral downward trend for their company: 8’s hire 7’s who in turn hire 6’s who in tune hire 5’s and downward it all spirals downward.

I suggested that he possibly make a copy of the information to share with senior management in all corporate clients.

He replied that this would upset too many people and that he would appreciate if I just could send him for Free a copy to read of my university dissertation “The Effects Of Telemarketing And Personal Sales Visits On Sales”.

I replied suggesting that he should invest the \$14.95 which is about the cost of a lunch to have access to all of the website's libraries which will have some of this information as well as so much more that would be of value to him.

About a year ago, I received a direct telephone call from a company president expressing interest in the website information but he was nervous.

He mentioned that it made him nervous to think that if he read the information that he may possibly consider changing his ideas and ways about his business development efforts. He was also afraid that these new ideas and efforts could upset his current staff and that he did not want to upset them in any way.

Being that prior to my 25 year business career I was a counselor, my heart and mind seemed to 'click on' where I actually consoled this person as a counselor would and assured him that his life would not be ruined and if anything, his business would improve so he could look forward to better business days and a good retirement.

But to get back to your specific question on if I volunteer my services and skills; the answer is yes but only to close business associates and to worthy not for profit organizations.

I do share important information in articles that I have written and are published in numerous professional business magazines and journals.

I volunteer the information especially for trade and business association groups which are very worthy organizations.

Of recent, I am discussing with the local city newspaper the possibility of a special newspaper column of "Ask The Business Doctor."

I am also talking to a couple radio stations about a special call in segment of "Ask The Business Doctor" where the audience can call in questions or discuss creative business development ideas.

All of this is still in the discussion stage, though.

Sometimes, I barter or trade my services in exchange for things.

I helped a landscape tree farm to market their trees in exchange for some plants for my own personal yard.

I helped an owner of a lakeside resort to market their lodgings in exchange for my personal vacation lodging there.

There are several more examples of such.

***Interviewer:***

In a previous interview you mentioned that you believed that there is a strong possibility that government will one day offer business development programs along with funding to US Businesses and do so partnering with local colleges.

You also mentioned that colleges would need to expand their expertise and educational offerings to include quality improvement in all departments and functions beyond just product improvement.

Are there other skills and educational subjects that you think colleges need to become proficient in and offer?

***Response:***

In regards to business development, marketing, sales, and management; there is definitely a list of subjects that more local colleges and universities need to incorporate into their offerings.

Let me just mention some of them briefly:

1. How to prevent the “The Rule of 10”
2. Training and training the trainer
3. Adult learning concepts
4. The importance of continual skill development
5. Team concept and managing within such of an environment
6. Marketing communications of all types
7. Creativity and “out of the box thinking” and how to achieve this
8. The importance of constant improvement in all departments and functions
9. Developing strategic alliances
10. Networking and developing network groups
11. Competing in today’s global market

In addition to this, I suggest just looking through the libraries on the website to see other important topics.

Often, the local colleges and universities focus the majority of their marketing efforts to recruiting high school graduates.

I suggest that they significantly expand their marketing efforts to focus far more efforts to the adult sector and in the local businesses and local companies.

Often, there are even state and federal funds available to help pay for employees to improve their education and skills.

The schools should be well versed in these and be willing to assist companies to utilize such programs.

I do believe that the local colleges and universities is the key for training these subjects which in turn will help companies and businesses to significantly improve operations, sales and profits.

This will significantly help businesses to compete and survive in this new global economy.

***Interviewer:***

You previously mentioned to us something about a “hockey stick sales curve”.  
What is this “hockey stick curve”?

***Reply;***

With companies and businesses that get trained in all of the topics listed on the website and actually implement aggressive business development programs utilizing all of this; when sales and profits are tracked, measured, and charted, the graph looks like a “hockey stick”.

There is a length of time when sales and profits do not increase substantially. This is normally the time that it takes to develop the majority of the business development programs and get them implemented.

Within a short time of having several of the business development programs implemented, sales and profits start to increase and continue to do so causing this “hockey stick” shape on a sales graph.

The important thing is to know that implementing one program by itself does not nearly have the positive sales and profit results as implementing all of the business development programs that are needed to support all business development fundamentals.

The fundamentals are discussed on the website.

***Interviewer;***

You heavily promote the importance for “creativity” and “out of the box thinking” in business development.

How difficult is it for people to get this mind set and be able to think this way?

How do you get others to become more “creative” and “think outside the box”?

***Reply;***

It is common for people to say that they are creative and think outside the box.

When I ask them to give me some examples of their recent “creative” and “outside the box thinking” things especially with business development; often they have little to discuss.

It is difficult for people to be creative and think outside the box for 3 reasons.

1. Most people have grown up being taught not to be creative and not to think outside the box. When young and in school, we are taught to color between the lines and that there is only one correct answer to the teachers question.
2. Often, jobs do not require people to be creative and think outside the box.
3. Rarely do you find people who have been trained or taught to “take off the blinders” and to be “creative” and “think outside the box.”

Yes, there are training courses out there to help people do this but they are difficult to find because there are so few of them.

I personally have taken and participated in training courses in becoming more “creative” and to “think outside the box”.

I highly recommend these training courses.

Such training is needed to help individuals “take off the blinders.”

“Creativity” and “outside the box thinking” is essential for business development in addition to competing and surviving in the new global business marketplace.

When I train people on business development I include training in “creativity” and “outside the box thinking”.

I take people through a series of fun brain and thought provoking exercises that really helps to “take off those blinders”.

At the completion of the training session people are truly astounded on their new outlook of “creativity” and the importance of “thinking outside the box.”

People from my training sessions often comment about how they never want to go back to being closed minded. They comment how being “creative” and “outside the box thinking” is far more fun and effective in both their jobs and their personal life.

***Interviewer;***

You previously mentioned the importance of implementing all business development programs utilizing “creativity” and “out of the box thinking.”

Why is it so important to launch several business development programs?

Why not just one or two?

***Reply;***

First of all, there is never a stupid or wrong creative idea.

All creative ideas are welcome.

They may need adjusting or fine tuning to try or to work but all creative ideas are needed and should be welcome.

An idea that does not work for one market or customer may work for some others.

An idea that does not work this year may work next year due to changes in the market or changes within your own organization.

Companies need to try many creative business development programs to see which ones are effective in what markets and with what types of customers.

You can view this approach to tossing some cooked spaghetti noodles to a wall prior to serving dinner.

Some noodles may stick and others will fall off the wall.

But you keep cooking the noodles and tossing the noodles to the wall until most of the noodles finally stick to the wall indicating that the noodles are completely cooked and ready to serve.

As with noodles, you use “creativity” and “out of the box thinking” in developing several business development programs and approaches to your markets and customers. Some will stick and prove themselves to be effective in increasing sales and profits.

The need to be “creative” and “out of the box thinking” for business development can be illustrated by a story about three retail stores next to each other in a strip mall along a road.

These three stores have similar products that they are selling.

All of these stores are trying to get customers to come into their store to buy their products.

The store on one end puts up a large banner in their front store window saying “20% off sale”

Customers start going into this store and staying out of the other two stores.

Later that week the store owner at the other end of the three stores puts a banner in his store window saying “prices drastically reduced for end of year clearance sale”

Customers start going into this store and avoiding the other two stores.

Well, the owner to the middle store seeing this thought awhile on the challenges from his two competitors next door to him on each side. The store owner knew that he needed something real “creative” and “outside the box thinking”.

The next day he put a large sign over his front store entrance saying “entrance to building here”.

Some times the most effective business development programs are simple but “creative”.

Staying ahead of local, national, and global competition is important.

Like the hikers in the woods who came across an angry bear.

Both stopped and looked at each other.

One of the hikers slowly took a pair of racing gym shoes out of his backpack and put them on.

The other hiker said “Why are you being so foolish; don’t you know bears can run up to 30 miles per hour and can out run us?”

The hiker with the racing gym shoes on smiled back and said “I am not worried about out running the bear, all I have to do is out run you and stay ahead of you.”

### ***Interviewer;***

What is the most common thing that interferes with utilizing “creativity”, “out of the box thinking” for Business Development and improvements?

Also, how do you handle it?

***Reply;***

I would say that the most common obstacle is the “Nay Sayers”.

These are people who have negative attitudes and are not willing to do what ever is needed to improve.

They often can be heard commenting “that is not my job”, “we are not paid to do that”, “we are not paid enough to do that”, “what is in it for me”, “that won’t work”, “I am not interested in helping”.

These people with their negative attitudes will get in the way of improving and growing the business.

They may try to demoralize all of the good feelings and excitement about business development.

Such people are “bad apples”.

As we all know, one bad apple in a barrel of good apples will eventually turn all of the apples in the barrel to bad.

When I was younger and early in my business career, I used to think that a lot of extra personal effort working with such “Nay Sayers” and “bad apples” will turn them around to become good team members.

My experience and business maturity teaches me that this rarely works.

It is very difficult for me to say this but I have learned that it is best that the “Nay Sayers” and “bad apples” get identified quickly and removed from the group to some other function in the company or unfortunately, asked to leave the company all together.

***Interviewer;***

Can you share with us some stories about any interesting business conversations that you recently have had?

I have a few recent ones that I can tell you about.

I spoke with one company owner about his struggles increasing sales and profits. In the first conversation he mentioned how his distribution sales channel was not doing well and all that they do is complain of his prices being too high and not competitive. The next phone call from him, he mentioned how he has been trying to recruit independent sales agencies to sell his product and he is struggling to find anyone interested in working with him.

Our last conversation centered on that his comments about his struggles are indicating company issues that need resolving.

Another company president contacted me to discuss how his company could benefit immensely from my business development skills but he did not know if he wanted to create too much business.

He thought that hiring more staff to handle the business growth was too much trouble and he rather limit his growth to just an amount that his current staff level could handle.

He expressed his dislike with having to work with employees.

I suggested that he consider the possibility of selling the business to alleviate himself of his dislikes.

An executive recruiter contacted me to say that he had a client interested in my business development skills and they wanted to know if I knew of someone with such business development skills that would work in a junior level position.

I indicated that I did not know anyone fitting these criteria.

Before the end of the conversation, the executive recruiter mentioned that he had several companies as clients who were looking for individuals with extensive business development skill sets to fill entry level positions.

I explained that extensive business development skills are only obtained with a lot of progressive experience, education and training.

I spoke with a manager of business development who said that they were fearful of losing their job soon because they were not finding any new business.

I asked about their experience and training in business development and they responded that they did not have any.

Then I asked how they got the job and they said it was an entry level paying position and she was the only one applying that had any education beyond high school level.

The person said that they like the position title though.

A company vice president contacted me to discuss business development.

During our conversation he commented that the company never hires skilled people because the company does not pay well nor do they put skilled people in the appropriate level position where the skills can be utilized.

He commented that they take the view point that they should not hire skilled people since all that such skilled people will do is eventually leave them and this is too embarrassing to the company.

Needless to say, we then discussed the possibility of the company's senior management to rethink their approach to the value of recruiting and retaining skilled employees.

I had a conversation with a company president about utilizing a team approach to develop and implement creative business development programs and also seek out ways for internal improvements that could save the company money and time.

He commented that this is not a good approach for him because people would expect bonuses for such work and he is not willing to give any.

I mentioned that bonuses can be based on a percentage of cost savings or a percentage of increased profits from any progress and in so being not really costing him anything.

I went on with explaining how reward systems to support positive growth and improvement supports such behavior and encourages more of such good things. He commented that it was against his personal nature to reward anyone with bonuses and that people should just be glad that he has given them a job. Our conversation then proceeded to discussing what the current successful companies are doing with their employees to grow sales and profits and make it a great place to work.

I currently speaking with a couple radio stations about a possible weekly special call in session of “Ask The Business Doctor” where listeners can call in to ask questions and discuss business development. One program manager mentioned that he thought that business people riding in their car on the way to and from work or late in the evening would rather listen to music than listen to a conversation about creative business development. My first reaction to this comment was that I thought the program manager was pretty ignorant and quite wrong. But after thinking about his comment a few days, I fear that he may be right after all. This is part of the challenge of business people needing help to increase their awareness and increase their skills.

Another company president called me back to say that he applied some of the things that I advised him with and the results were truly astounding. His staff were excited about working in teams, being creative with improvement ideas and implementing creative business development programs. In just a few weeks, on time attendance has improved. Everyone comes in early and many stay late. The employees appear to really like working there, now. The president has even gained 5 pounds in weight because people are now bringing in home made bakery and treats to the company to share and he loves the home made food. I of course asked about sales and any internal improvements. He replied that they picked up two new accounts, sales have started to increase and several internal improvements have been made based on the employee suggestions. Some of these improvements have saved the company some substantial money. He commented that he wished that he had taken this approach a long time ago. Before the end of our conversation, I reminded him not to forget to show sincere personal appreciation, recognition to all and to implement an incentive and reward system to encourage more improvement and more progress. I explained that he needs to do everything possible to keep such positive progress going. This is an important responsibility for all leaders and for all company presidents.

As mentioned earlier in this interview, I am discussing with some newspapers and radio stations about having a special “Ask The Business Doctor” segment. One radio station program manager mentioned that he thought that business people and general workers on their way to and from work in their cars are probably more interested in listening to music than how to help grow their company with business development programs and improvements.

My first reaction to this statement was that he was ignorant and he himself full of bad attitudes.

But after a couple days of thinking about what he said, I started wondering if he was actually correct.

This made me quite sad.

My thoughts continued to wonder how far down do companies and businesses have to decline and the high unemployment have to continue getting worse, until people realize that business development and the need for all businesses to improve are major issues to everyone.

How much hurt has to be there in companies and in people's private life until everyone realizes that only through skill development and business development will the economy rebound and good jobs become available for everyone?

***Interviewer;***

I liked the amusing stories that you used to illustrate important fundamentals.

Thank you for the information.

It truly was informative and value.

Michael P. Marshall, PhD

Michael has a PhD in Business, an MBA, BS degrees in Psychology and Social Human Behavior, and federally certified in International Business along with 25 years of experience in sales, marketing & business development starting as a field sales staff and advancing to Director and VP levels in marketing and sales.

Even though he is a practicing professional by working as a full time staff Director or Vice President of Sales, Marketing & Business Development, Michael does keep a limited consulting practice.

His website of [www.AskTheBusinessDoctor.com](http://www.AskTheBusinessDoctor.com) offers important business information as well as business development consulting programs available.

His main focus of expertise is Business Development utilizing extensive skills and experience in marketing, sales management, and "creativity" / "out of the box thinking" for business development.

Michael has considerable respect to the capabilities and power of professional independent sales agencies in helping companies develop significant business in both major and niche markets.

He can be reached at 918-499-1970 as well on his website of [www.AskTheBusinessDoctor.com](http://www.AskTheBusinessDoctor.com)