

**THE IMPORTANT WINNING COMBINATION
OF
EXTENSIVE FIELD EXPERIENCE
EXTENSIVE BUSINESS EDUCATION & TRAINING
CONTINUAL EDUCATION & TRAINING
Plus
“CREATIVITY”, “INNOVATION” and “OUT OF THE BOX THINKING”
FOR
SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

One without the others is not effective.

To be effective in business development all of these skills and attributes are critical and now needed.

Let me make a comment that most people will agree with.

“Today’s business environment, the US economy and the world economy have all changed considerably.

Many of these changes are here to stay with even more challenges and changes yet to come.

So many of the old ways do not work and are now ineffective and obsolete.

New thinking, new ways and methods of growing a business let alone surviving and staying in business are now needed more than ever.”

Keeping this in mind, I will make another bold comment.

“Only with a combination of extensive education, training, creativity, innovation, out of the box thinking plus extensive field experience will any individual or group of individuals in a business, have a chance to successfully adapt to the many changes; and be able to effectively grow a business in this new business environment.”

The only way to grow a business in the new business environment is to establish a group of people or team with each individual having these skills and attributes.

It has become utmost important to hire the highest skilled individuals available with the most knowledge even if their skills and knowledge is higher than the management level who are hiring them.

To find, recruit, and retain such skilled individuals will require several changes. And business attitude shifts.

1. Staff and skilled individuals will need to be entrusted to participate in critical business decisions and efforts well beyond previous levels.

2. Staff will need to have incentives and rewards tied to the details of their efforts that will contribute to business growth well beyond previous notions and interpretations of such.
3. Staff will need to be entrusted with a variety of information well beyond what was ever shared before.
4. Staff will need encouragement and financial support to continue advancing their skills and knowledge to keep them at the very leading edge of effectively contributing to business development.
5. The “Rule of 10” is now considered a ‘business cancer’ that will significantly hinder business growth and contribute to any company going out of business. The “Rule of 10” is simply the common business phenomenon where, on a skill & knowledge level rating of 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest level; people have a common tendency to hire those people at skill/knowledge levels below their own. Senior management with skill levels of 8-10 have a tendency to hire middle management staff with skill levels/knowledge of 7-8 who in turn hire lower management and supervisors with skill levels/knowledge of 5-7, and so on downward.

If there is attrition with management moving out and lower management with the lower skill/knowledge levels moving up, the skill/knowledge levels can deteriorate to dangerous low levels.

A spiral down of skills occurs when actually a spiral upward is needed.

This natural tendency to hire people with lower level skills/knowledge happens both consciously and unconsciously and for a variety of unhealthy and unproductive reasons.

Businesses and companies now have to acknowledge the potential of falling prey to this “Rule of 10” phenomenon and prevent it at all cost.

To obtain extensive field experience it takes very unique individuals with a strong desire to learn, improve, advance and understand the long term value to broaden ones experience and depth of experience especially with important skills.

To accomplish this, such individuals must feel comfortable with change, taking on new positions, assignments, responsibilities, and challenges.

This is certainly different than most people who feel more comfortable with stability and comfort zones.

To obtain extensive education and training it also takes very unique individuals who have the internal drive and passion and understand the importance to develop the best skills & obtain important knowledge available.

The top tier of such individuals will actively seek out continual education and training to keep them abreast of skills, knowledge, changes, and anything else that it may take to stay at the leading edge of progress.

Continual education and training is obtained from numerous sources.

1. Seminars and classes offered by trade associations & professional associations
2. Personal research via internet and reading

3. Professional business magazines, journals, and other publications
4. Publications from trade associations and professional associations
5. Local community colleges
6. Colleges & universities
7. Local library sponsoring seminars
8. Various community groups' sponsoring special seminars
9. Local chamber of commerce organizations sponsoring special seminars
10. Consultants
11. Various educational and skill development trainings offered by professional associations such as American Management Association, American Marketing Association, Direct Marketing Association, Sales & Marketing Executives International, Training & Development Association and many others
12. Trade shows offering special training & seminars
13. A variety of independent training organizations
14. And numerous other resources

To stay at top skill and knowledge levels, individuals must have a personal strong desire and passion to do so and companies need to aggressively encourage and support such continual education and training.

The skills and knowledge needed to be effective in business development is quite substantial.

To illustrate the importance of extensive education, training, and field working experience, let's list just some of the many specific subjects that are critical for business development.

1. Sales
2. Selling Strategies, Methods, & Techniques
3. Marketing
4. Marcom / Marketing Communications
5. Communications
6. Advertising & PR
7. Sales & Marketing Support Tools
8. Lead Generation Programs
9. Database Mining & Creative Sorting
10. Database Management
11. Market Research & Field Research
12. Market Trend Analysis
13. Sales Channels Expansion & Management
14. Distribution & Logistics Management
15. Territory Management
16. Trade Show Management & Utilization
17. Training, Development & Training Management
18. Adult Learning
19. Business Psychology
20. Interpersonal Dynamics & Group Dynamics
21. Team Building & Utilization

22. Team Building Across All Functions & Departments to Achieve Beneficial Cooperation
23. Developing Effective Incentive Programs & Reward Systems
24. Finding, Hiring & Retaining Top Skilled People
25. Managing & Preventing the “Rule of 10” Phenomenon Which is a “Business Cancer”
26. Account Development & Management
27. Telemarketing
28. Customer Service & Managing a Customer Service Function
29. Managing an Inside Sales Department Function
30. Managing Direct Sales Staff Networks
31. Managing Independent Distributor Networks
32. Managing Independent Representative Sales Networks
33. Managing Marketing Efforts & Departments
34. Competitive Intelligence & Bench Marking
35. Sales & Marketing Strategies
36. Niche Marketing & Sales
37. Value Added Sales & Marketing
38. Branding & Image Building
39. Push Through vs. Pull Through Strategies, Marketing & Sales
40. Deductive vs. Inductive Thinking, Reasoning & Strategies
41. Elastic vs. Inelastic Pricing vs. Price Points
42. Creative Budgeting & Cost Control
43. ROI / Return of Investment Analysis
44. Profit & Loss Responsibilities
45. Profit & Cost Analysis
46. Website Development & Management
47. Merchandising
48. POS / Point of Sales Support
49. E Commerce
50. International Business & Cultures
51. Total Quality Management & Improvement in All Departments and Functions
52. Root Cause Analysis
53. Time Management
54. Product Management
55. Project Management
56. Service Management
57. Developing Business Plans & Marketing Plans
(“A company without a business/marketing plan is like a ship without a rudder. It leaves the dock and travels in circles never reaching its destination”)
58. “Creativity”, “Innovation” & “Out of the Box Thinking”
59. Motivating Employees & Fellow Staff
60. Motivating Independent Representatives & Distributors
61. Motivating and Influencing Customers
62. Handling Difficult Customers
63. Handling Difficult Sales Situations
64. Handling Difficult Employee Situations & Circumstances
65. Handling a Variety of Difficult Business Situations & Circumstances

66. Creative Problem Solving
67. Crisis Management & Resolution
68. Developing Strategic Alliances
69. Developing Referral Programs
70. Effective Networking
71. Basic Business Accounting
72. Basic Business Finance
73. Basic Business Law
74. Basic Business Tax Issues
75. Basic Human Resources & Personnel
76. Basic Employment Law
77. And More

From this list of fundamentals you should be able to now understand the importance of extensive education, training, continual education & training, and extensive actual field working experience.

All of the above is needed to be effective in business development.

Keep in mind that it would be difficult to learn all of these fundamentals from just one resource.

A college or university would not teach all of these subjects.

These fundamentals are learned from numerous resources with many such resources listed already in this article.

You should also now understand why a passionate effort by individuals to obtain these skills and experience plus keep them updated is something noble, worthy, and utmost important for business development.

Education and training alone is not effective.

Experience alone is not effective.

Education & training, plus experience, plus continual education & training is the winning combination for business development.

I can easily show the importance of each of the above 77 skills listed with illustrations of several common challenges and situations.

To do so would extend this article too many pages though.

With a little thinking of your own about each of the 77 skills, you should be able to uncover common everyday occurrences that illustrate each of them.

Such things are common and should be very visible to you.

When individuals are asked about their level of “creativity”, “innovation”, and “out of the box thinking”; most will automatically reply that they are good at this.

Often, they are not nearly as good at this as they think they are.

Unfortunately only a few companies and businesses have developed a working environment that encourages “creativity”, “innovation” and “out of the box thinking” and also have adequate incentives and rewards for it.

To be good and effective at “creativity”, “innovation”, and “out of the box thinking”, three things must happen.

1. Individuals must have formal training in this and have continual training to reinforce it
2. Companies and businesses must have significant incentives and rewards for such
3. The senior management and leaders must develop a company culture that strongly encourages “creativity”, “innovation”, and “outside the box thinking”

Without these three main components; “creativity”, “innovation”, and “out of the box thinking” will not happen to any adequate level.

Without the three components, efforts will be meager and any discussions about it will be mostly “lip service” and “wishful thinking” only.

For individuals who have the passion and internal drive to have obtained these skills and knowledge via the combination of extensive education, training, continual education & training plus actual field working experience: you should be commended and understand that many companies and business truly need your skills and knowledge especially in today’s new business environment.

For those individuals who have obtained some limited education, training and experience; you may consider being more aggressive in your efforts to do more.

For companies and businesses that do not have staff with the extensive skills via education, training and experience; you may want to consider seeking out such staff to hire.

Then set up programs to encourage staff to obtain more of such skills plus develop a working environment to encourage the utilization of all of the skills including “creativity”, “innovation”, and “out of the box thinking”.

If your competitor acquire these highly skilled people before you, your business may struggle more and your challenges may become far more difficult.

Michael P. Marshall, PhD

Michael has a PhD in Business, an MBA, BS in Psychology, 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 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.