

Five Business Lessons You Can Learn from a Game

Life can be the best teacher of all when you take the time to pay attention to what life is telling you. Whenever you engage in a sport or competition of some type there are many lessons you can apply to your career or business. I spent the last week on a golf vacation with some friends and it reminded me of the similarities to golf and business. Here are five things that you can transfer to your business to help you achieve even greater success.

It's all in your head! Golf, just like business, is a mental game. Once you understand the basics of the game, you just need to get out of your own way and play. You can easily psych yourself out and make mistakes that hurt your score. That is especially true when you are standing on the tee box looking out over a lake at a postage stamp size green about 150 yards away and wondering how you are going to land a ball on the green. The same is true for almost any tough shot you are facing. Your mind starts playing with you and it is easy to screw it up – believe me I know. The best way to approach shots like these are to confidently approach the tee box, take your normal pre-shot setup and hit the shot. Don't spend a lot of time thinking about it or telling yourself you are going to mess it up. Just do it. The same is true in business, when you need to get out of your comfort zone or do something you are not used to doing, prepare accordingly and then just do it. You will find that approaching it this way will lead to more success than failure.

Good decisions lead to great results! Decision-making is also a major factor in golf the same as it is in business. If you understand the layout of the course you are playing and where you may get into trouble, then you will make better decisions. Like, which club to use, where to aim for, how hard to hit it and should you try to hit it high and soft or long and low? If you don't play with a smart strategy then your score will be higher than it needs to be. I made this mistake a few times this past week and it costs me several strokes! The same is true in business. Do you have a smart strategy for your business? Do you execute it effectively? Are the decisions you make in alignment with your strategy? How often do you stop and survey the 'course' to make sure you are running your business in a way that will allow you to be as successful as possible?

What's your attitude? Another area that golf mimics business is attitude. It can be very easy to get discouraged or aggravated when playing golf. If you make a few bad shots or have a couple of holes in a row that you don't score well on, then your attitude can start to deteriorate. It is interesting to watch someone who is having fun – laughing and joking when they are playing well – then they hit a few bad shots and the attitude changes. Once this happens, their game usually starts going down hill. The attitude you bring to your business is the same thing. If you keep a positive attitude, believe that you will do well and follow your plan of action, you will see positive results. It is inevitable that some bad things will happen, but if you don't dwell on them or let them bring you down, your business will be much more successful. You are what you think about ... if you think bad

things are going to happen, that is what you will get. A positive attitude leads to positive action and any failures along the way will be learning experiences that lead to greater success.

Are you having fun? So many times, I play golf with people that take the game so seriously that they just don't have any fun. They are so concerned with making every shot a great one that any poor shot leads to anger and frustration. Why play if you are not going to have fun along the way? The same is true for business. You work way too hard and put in too many hours for it not to be fun at all. Make work fun and you will find that the days go smoother, you will be happier, your employees and customers will be happier and success will come more quickly. A fun environment is one that everyone can appreciate. It leads to a better quality of life and work. If it's not fun then why do it?

Practice makes perfect – or at least better! If I don't play golf for a few weeks, my game starts to go downhill. It takes some time to get my swing back when I start playing and the first several holes will not go very well. Practice between rounds helps to keep my game fresh and comfortable. Tiger Woods, arguably the best golfer in the world, has a very disciplined practice program. He will practice between tournaments, before a round begins and right after he finishes a round. Why? Because he understands that he can always get better and that if he wants to stay on the top of his game he needs to continually fine-tune his skills. What are you doing to keep your business skills up to date? Do you practice your sales, service, financial, leadership and other critical skills? Are you reading books, attending workshops, visiting websites and blogs or subscribing to publications that can help you get better? Take a cue from Tiger and all the other professionals at the top of their games and make sure you practice regularly. Hiring a coach can also be a great way to hone your skills and learn new ones.

Apply these five areas to your business to continue your growth and success. You will find that the better you are at these five things in your business, the more they will carry over to the games you play and vice versa.

To Your Success,
Dennis