



## The 6-Step Process That Leads to BIG Sales with CEO Coaching's Jerry Swain

Steve Sanduski:

Hi, everybody. Welcome to another episode of On Your Mark, Get Set, Grow. This is the podcast of CEO Coaching International, where we talked to the world's leading entrepreneurs, CEOs and coaches who are looking at to make big happen. I'm your host, Steve Sanduski. Our guest today is Jerry Swain. After a highly recognized career in sales management at IBM and some other high-tech companies, Jerry jumped off the corporate track and became an entrepreneur. He started of all things, a high-end specialty chocolate company. Well, this turned out to be a great move as Jerry and the team built a highly successful company that ended up receiving four buyout offers and he eventually sold it to a strategic buyer. And now, Jerry is a coach at CEO Coaching International.

In today's conversation, we talk about how to develop an effective sales training process and the lessons that Jerry learned during his time at IBM, which is widely recognized as one of the best sales training organizations in the world. We then discuss how he built his chocolate company, how he figured out the profitable market segment he could fill, and how he overcame the inevitable struggles along the entrepreneurial journey. Be sure to listen to the end when Jerry shares his strangest daily habit. I have to say, it's one that I think we should all emulate. Now, please enjoy our conversation with Jerry Swain.

Jerry, welcome to the show.

Jerry Swain:

Thank you, Steve. I'm excited to be here with you.

Steve Sanduski:

Well, it's great to have you on. Let's talk about sales here. Let's start off with that. I know the first job you got out of college was with IBM. So, that was a real plum opportunity. IBM certainly one of the most respected companies out there, and they're also really well known for their sales training. So, I think he

went into the sales area. If you could, tell me a little bit about how you learned about sales while working for IBM.

Jerry Swain: Yeah, absolutely. It was an amazing experience. Even to this day, I think I just have taken so much of what I learned through the sales training and have applied it in so many areas of my life and in business. I don't know if you know, but IBM trained a lot of other companies. So, I know that AT&T and Kodak and I believe Xerox sent some of their employees to their sales training. It was not an easy process. It was over a year long, and it was certainly a boot camp, four very intense classes. Everything was rated on competition. There was a lot of pre-work that was into it. But the wonderful thing about it is when you came out of the sales training, the confidence gave you was absolutely amazing.

I remember going in and everybody was asking through the first class, "When are we going to learn about the products and the services and all that?" They said, "You're not." They said, 'you're going to learn about the process of sales. The customer tailored to sales call. How you go about a process with a customer, and you're finding out the pains of the customer. You don't need to know about the product, you need to know about their business, what's bothering them. And if there's a match and a solution that we have, that's how you're going to make your sale.'" It was just an absolute wonderful experience.

Steve Sanduski: Now, in terms of the process, did they have the five step IBM sales process? Was it that finely tuned or how did that work?

Jerry Swain: Oh, absolutely. It was actually six steps, and each step probably had anywhere from 10 to 30 sub steps. And so, you learn the basic framework of a sales call and under each one, they would dissect those further along. And then it all came down really to role plays. It was very nerve wracking, because the when the training consistent of going through these processes and then digging deeper into the process and role playing those. They had all these surprise role plays and by our second class, we were role playing once and twice a day, graded on it, and nerve wracking.

In fact, I remember one time you got to know some of the instructors and you said, "You know, she's a lot easier than that guy over there. That's not fair if I'm getting graded by him and not her." What the sales trainers would say, "You know what? Not all the customers are the same either. They're going to grade you differently. So, you get what you get. And that's what's going to happen out in the field as well."

Steve Sanduski: Do you remember what those six steps where?

Jerry Swain: I do. It was a build rapport, qualify, understand needs, presents solution, handle objections, and close.

Steve Sanduski: Okay. So, like building rapport for example, can you share some examples of how you initially establish rapport in a sales conversation?

Jerry Swain: Certainly. A lot of this goes deep. There's pre-call planning, there's during the call planning that help you potentially allow you to establish rapport. But the basic steps are from the nonverbal, from being able to make eye contact, how you present yourself physically from shaking hands. Back in the day, the business card was the big thing, that's not as predominant today. But also, the questioning techniques. Being able to observe what's around the room, what's in the office? Doing some pre-work that's going to get them talking. So, it was a lot of asking questions, a lot of asking open ended questions. That was with the premise of really the whole sales call was, is they didn't want you speaking at all, they wanted you asking questions from the very beginning. From building rapport, to understanding the needs of the company.

Steve Sanduski: Do you recall some of the questions that you would typically ask? I think obviously, asking questions is a great way to build rapport. It's also a great way to do more of consultative sale and really trying to draw out from the potential customer or client what their needs are. So, do you recall some of the questions that worked effectively?

Jerry Swain: There wasn't a generic list. There were a lot of different questions to pull from. But depending on what you knew about the company and what you knew about the individual or the team that you were working with, or what had been going on in their business, that was typically what you started off with. Personally, I like breaking down barriers and asking some personal questions. Some people are very open to answering the personal questions and they'll sit there with you for 10, 15 minutes and they'd enjoy the chitchat, and sharing a little about them personally. Others want to get right down to business.

So, you had to read that from the beginning and basically be ready to ask specific questions. But the easiest questions could be like, how long have you been involved with the business? Tell me about the journey that you went through. Do you live in the area? If you're up in Milwaukee, Milwaukee is in the playoffs, something that builds rapport if there are sports fan. Whatever may be. You may see something on the wall that they have kids, grandkids, you might comment about that. And you kind of see what lightens up their eyes and their face when they start talking about it.

Steve Sanduski: In terms of the role playing, can you share some of the specifics in terms of how that was structured? Were you all in a room and you'd have two people would role play and it would just be like, row after row of people role playing? Or would it be more like you'd have two people up at the front of the room role playing and everyone else would be watching and then maybe afterwards, there'd be a critique for everyone? Or how did that work?

Jerry Swain:

Well, the instructors initially showed us what a role play look like in the front of the class. But when we actually went to do a role plays, we were assigned a specific room. So, there was a closed room for every single role play, so you were not distracted by anything else. They tried to emulate what a potential sales call would look like going in. At that point, you either had an objective or they would give you some type of topic. I will tell you that one of the most memorable role plays we had, I think it was in our third class, which was called new business classes. Those were for sales reps like myself that weren't in charge of growing existing business, but really hitting the ground running and finding new business out there.

We all walked in the class ... Your class gets to know each other fairly well. I remember we walked in one morning, started at 8:00, we're all on our suits, so everybody's dressed up. And, it just had a bunch of letters and numbers on the chalkboard. The instructors always started on time, right at 8:00. All of a sudden, 8:10, 8:15 goes by and we're all looking at each other like what's going on. We're looking out the window, we don't see anybody. And then we realized on the chalkboard, we did some problem solving and we realized it was our initial. All the initials of everybody in the class. Next to our initials, was a number. We realize it's the room number we were assigned to. So, we basically walked in blind that day, had to figure out what was on the chalkboard, what it meant, where we're going, and when we all, as a group, as a team, figured out what we're doing, we all went to the call.

I remember walking to the call and it was an upset customer call. I walked in, and basically the person started screaming at you and you had to go in. Part of the process was you could never break role. If you ever broke role, you get zero. A zero. It doesn't matter. There's no exception. So, you had to go right into role. You can ask questions like what's going on here? Why are we here? You had to go right into role. I'll never forget. It was very impactful, but it was also giving you a real-world experience.

Steve Sanduski:

Oh, I love that example. As you think back on some of the role playing that you did back in those days, what was the hardest part of the sales process for you to just really get nailed down?

Jerry Swain:

That's a great question. I think everybody had a little bit different area. I felt that I did very well at the beginning, which was asking a lot of questions, building rapport, understanding the needs. I got really good at probing and getting to the root cause or the root challenges of the pains of the company. The presentation, I thought was okay. I always thought the handling of objections in the closing, although I was very confident, I always thought that those are the areas that could always get improvement. Because you can predict objections, but you never know what they are. And typically, an objection of what you hear is not what's really going on. It's an objection that they say, but there's something more behind it.

So, being able to be in that circumstance where it's a little bit under pressure, it's a little bit awkward, and to be able to respond back the correct way to try to get to the real root of that objection was key. And then, if you're able to do that, it makes the clothes easier. But if you fumble a little bit or really don't get to the root, it makes the closing that much more difficult. So, the last two steps were probably the ones, and even today, that you try to hone in on, you try to build that craft and get better at.

Steve Sanduski: Okay. And as far as some of the other folks that were in the training with you, what would you sense would be maybe the biggest hang up that they would have? Would it be similar to what you were going through as well?

Jerry Swain: I think so. I think most people, the objections in the closing were the ongoing work that we all would tried to practice. You have different personalities. Some personalities were more apt to want to jump into selling the solution, and not doing as many of the questions on the call and they worked very hard on that with all of us. Because, they knew that was the key point on making sure that we have a satisfied customer, and that we're the right match for the customer.

Steve Sanduski: Let's go back to the selection process. When IBM was recruiting you for this position, what did they see in Jerry Swain that made them feel like this is going to be a great sales guy for our company?

Jerry Swain: I don't know. Sure. I was very grateful for the opportunity to work at IBM. The individuals there were just the crème de la crème. I learned so much from so many people there. I think probably just because I was out of school, I did hold a lot of leadership experience. I was student body president of my school. I was very involved in doing some innovative things at my college. I was involved with community work. But I think the way they looked at it is maybe there's something I they could teach me, right?

Some people say salespeople are born. I don't believe that. I don't think I wasn't born salesperson. I think I was very timid going into the sales process, because I didn't really understand it, didn't know what it meant. But the training was so good. It just gave a confidence about it. Perhaps maybe it was a little bit of the background, or they saw something in me that they thought they could mold into a decent salesperson for them.

Steve Sanduski: Well, then, generally speaking, in terms of the qualities that people need in order to be successful salespeople, what would you say are some of those qualities? If you're hiring a salesperson, what are you going to be looking for in that person? Knowing that it can be trained, but maybe some aptitudes that they have or personality traits that they may have that you want to look for and say, "Gosh, if they've gotten this, I know I can train them to be a great salesperson."

Jerry Swain: You know what? That's a good question. When I think about it, I would say asking questions. Somebody that's curious, somebody that's wants to know about a job. If you're interviewing somebody, I always like somebody that comes in and has done a little bit of their homework and asks a lot of questions versus coming in and making it about themselves and pitching themselves.

As I look back to the question you asked me previously, I grew up in 12 years I went to nine schools in four different states. And so, we moved around a lot. I moved five times during the middle of the school year. I remember when I would switch schools, part of being able to make friends when you're nine and 10 and 11 and 13 years old, is not going in talking about yourself, but asking questions. I think I probably learned to do that just from all the moves. That's how I made friends, because people like talking about themselves, and I came in showing interest there. Perhaps that maybe resonated when I went on the interview with IBM or when I go into any type of interview.

Steve Sanduski: And then when you actually got out of the training and you went into the field and you started making some sales, I think you ended up doing a massive turnaround with one of the territories or a territory that you were assigned to. So, walk us through that a little bit if you would. Tell us what was the situation that you went into and what were some of the things that you did to really turn it around.

Jerry Swain: There was a territory that had been open for about 18 years, and it had never generated any profit. They had gone through, I think 16 different reps down in the territory over the decade and a half. Being the new guy, I got thrown the scraps. You don't get the Primo territory that's going to generate a lot of commissions. So, they put me down there and I was just very motivated by the story behind it. I knew that if I was able to turn this around, it would make a mark and it would prove something to myself as well.

I didn't know a lot about the territory except that it wasn't performing, and there was some support down there. But I ended up really going into the community which had a lot more smaller emerging businesses rather than mid-sized businesses and did a lot of community forums. I got involved with the community, I had workshops, I looked at the leaders of the business community and just did a lot of networking at the time to try to build rapport, and to position IBM as a business solution provider down there. And so, all the value-added resellers I created relationships with. But I think the key for all of this, to be honest with you is just tapping into the knowledge at IBM.

There were so many great people to learn from that were running other territories that had been in the business for a while that had great experience. I just tried to spend as much time with them learning about what they suggested I would do. Fortunately, I had a lot of energy and grip to go down there and just really grind it out. We ended up turning the territory into a very profitable

territory, one that became a sought-after territory within about two years. So, it was a lot of fun, a lot of work, and I learned a lot through the process.

Steve Sanduski: All right. Well, then you decide that you're going to go from the high-tech industry of IBM into the chocolate business. That's a big switch. So, tell me about how you made the switch from going from big corporate America, big international company, to starting your own chocolate business.

Jerry Swain: Well, clearly, Steve, I saw no future in high-tech.

Steve Sanduski: Yeah, right.

Jerry Swain: Right? That was the big joke, "Okay, what are you doing. I understand the high-tech trajectory, but I don't get the chocolate one." The story is, is back in college, I made a chocolate peanut butter ball when I was an RA in the dorm for my staff. Much to my chagrin, when I brought them around campus, my fraternity brothers coined them Jerry's balls, which became a funny pun on campus. I did that for three years at Christmas time. Everybody asked me to make the peanut butter balls.

After I graduated I went to go work for IBM and my friend said, "Why don't you have a party at Christmas and get everybody together, make the Jerry's balls and we'll have a good time?" I said okay. Well, fast forward over the next nine years, the party grew. I turned it into a fundraiser for the food bank. It was dinner, dancing, we had it either at a hotel or a restaurant. I had 200 people approximately come in from all over the country. It was a great way for people to get back together to meet new friends, it was a great cause for the food bank. The center of the party later after dinner was my friends and bring up the Jerry's balls in a big presentation. So, the chocolate was the center of the party. And, my friends called the party Jerry's Ball. It was a very, very fun time.

I never thought I would do a business with the chocolates, but it was a great experience getting everybody together. Fast forward. I left IBM, I stayed in the high-tech industry, and I was getting the entrepreneurial itch. I had a chance to work for a midsize company as well as an emerging small business, and I had a couple of high-tech ideas. I brought those home to my dad. It was Christmas time, we were sitting around, and I was just getting antsy and itchy that I wanted to go out on my own. As we started talking, he was asking me lots of questions. And he finally said, "What do you like doing?" And so, I started telling him about the projects that I was looking at. He stopped me, and he says, "No, don't tell me what you want to do. Tell me what you like doing."

I had to stop for a second, think. It was a different question, right? I wanted to go right into what I was thinking about from a high-tech perspective. And as I started sharing with him some of my interests, which were I wanted to be closer to the customer, I have always had an interest in marketing and branding and if I could do something with that, I wanted to wrap goodwill and philanthropy into

a company that was going to be involved with. I started sharing all these things. And he said, "Have you ever thought about doing something with the chocolates?" Which again, it's been years since I've had the party. I said, "Not really." And so, we started talking about it, and that stuck in my head. That seed was planted in my head, and it bothered me.

And so, I decided to go to a chocolate conference. I did some research. I went out to Chicago, went to my first chocolate conference. I really fell in love with the people that were in the industry. High-tech is wonderful in so many ways, but it is very secretive, obviously, because there's a lot of IP floating around when you go to a conference in everybody's head, where this was a very nice sharing industry. Everybody was very passionate. For the time in my life before I was married and before I raised kids, it was an opportunity for me to potentially fail first, go through something, learn from it. And as my dad said, think about what the worst thing is that can happen. If you can live with that, maybe you should give it a shot. He saw the passion in my eyes about doing something that I really wanted to do, he helped clarify it for me, and then I jumped into the business about a year later with two feet.

Steve Sanduski: How did you actually "jump in to the business"? Did you say, "Oh, I want to be in the chocolate business", did you have to go out and contract with a chocolate manufacturer, get all the packaging? Maybe walk us through that process. And then also talk about the branding. You mentioned you had an interest in the marketing and branding. Walk us through how you thought about branding this chocolate, how you positioned it in the marketplace.

Jerry Swain: Okay, sure. Yeah. And, you know, I always say, "What took me the first four years in the company I can do in four months now." It was one of those processes where I just didn't know what I didn't know. I went from the high-tech industry where I'd proven myself and created a very good name in the industry and had a very comfortable career, and literally give it up for this passion of doing something that was very intriguing to me. And so, as I went through it, I did as much as I could and getting back to IBM asking lots of questions, trying to learn. I jumped in and realize it was a very seasonal type of business. I also realized that we had to create a niche type of product. Not a me-too type of product.

The process of learning how the business works took me a long time. We end up getting a copacker, I had to understand how copacker agreements worked. I had to realize that the recipe or recipes that I was creating had to be made for a larger plant. All the business infrastructure that goes around it. And then really finding what the niche was and what my cash needs were, and all of those things. It's a very cash intensive business, because you have to basically pay for everything up front in hopes that you're going to sell something. There's not a lot of pre-sell in the industry unless you're going to perhaps maybe a larger customer like a Costco or Walmart with a concept. But they're not going to look

at a concept from a new company. They're going to look at a concept from a more established type of company.

I think where I jumped in with both feet, Steve, was a meeting with Nordstrom. The buyer, her name was Dawn. It was down here in San Diego. She actually called and said, "Your chocolates were featured that you did a fundraiser for them." Part of our philanthropy was giving back. We did something to expose our chocolates, she read about it, I came in. I brought the chocolates in and I'll never forget. We're sitting there, and she was tasting the chocolates, she was very intimidating, very tall, very smart girl. She said, "You know, Jerry, I've been in this business for 17 years. Every year, somebody brings me a beautiful food package with a very so-so product inside." And then she said, "You have an amazing product in a really so-so package."

It was like the knife through the heart, right? It's was like I'm going to go see Nordstrom and then I get this feedback. But the great thing was, it was honest feedback. She loved the product and love the story behind the product so much that she really helped guide me and pointed me into a direction. We ended up pivoting, switching the packaging, and able to get into Nordstrom the following season. That's really when I jumped in with both feet. I was doing actually some sales consulting at the time. And, I realized once I got Nordstrom and then Whole Foods followed soon after that, I had to jump into this and go in all the way.

Steve Sanduski: Well, I think the good news there is that it's probably a lot easier to change the packaging than it is to come up with a much better product.

Jerry Swain: That's right. You are absolutely right.

Steve Sanduski: Tell us about the positioning then. You said you had to have a niche product here. What was the niche, and what was the thinking behind coming up with that particular niche? How did you do the research to decide that, okay, I think this could be a good niche that could be profitable for us where we could get some decent market share that would make this worthwhile for us.

Jerry Swain: Yep, sure. Easier to say, as Monday morning quarterback how we did it. We went through a process that was a lot of trial and error. And again, I think I could have expedited this so much faster knowing what I know now, but I did know that we didn't want to be a me-too product. We wanted to be a niche product. And so, there was really two areas that we looked at very closely. First was just the marketplace. Who exists in the marketplace, what is selling. And then the second one is what are the potential trends?

What we noticed in the marketplace is that we had a very fragmented industry with the Mondolez and the Mars and the Hershey's and the Ferreros taking up a ginormous amount of the market share that's out there. But we also saw the trends being of premium and specially types of chocolate having an opportunity.

So, the interesting niche that we pioneered in the space which we're very proud of is that when we looked at the data points, we found out a couple things. One, with the new generation coming up, younger millennials et cetera, people were looking for a product that had a story. Instead of maybe picking up Campbell's Soup they had Steve soup. Steve soup, the research was showing people were picking up those cans, reading them and wanting to know about it, because they were looking for something different than the gigantic brands. So, that was one thing that we had to our advantage, and we had to build a brand around those components that we're going to be satisfying to those people that are looking.

The second piece is, is what's the flavor profile? What's going to differentiate our product, because we were going out with a premium product? We were never going to be able to compete with a Snickers or a Hershey bar, a commodity. So, we had to go out specialty. What we realized when we looked at this industry, it's a \$21 billion industry, that 84% of all the chocolates that are sold in the United States at the time had peanuts or peanut butter in them. In the top three candy bars were always Snickers, Reese's Peanut Butter Cup, peanut M&Ms. Seven of the top 12 SKUs that were sold in the United States had peanuts or peanut butter on them.

We realize that there is a affinity in the United States for peanut butter and chocolate. We then looked at the emerging side of the business, the specialty side. This side of the business was growing at eight to nine times faster than the commodity business. We looked at it and less ... We couldn't find anybody that had a premium peanut butter and chocolate products. So, we always said less than 1%. Maybe there was something out there, but you just couldn't find it. So, we positioned ourselves as the pioneer of gourmet peanut butter and chocolate. We started off with chocolate peanut butter balls, similar to the balls that came back from the Jerry's Ball and balls from the past and we tweaked the recipe, and then we added four more flavors and started selling gift boxes from there. From there another learning was, again I did it all backwards, I started off with a seasonal product where I probably should have started off with an everyday product and went into seasonal, but the gift boxes became a big hit.

We won a lot of international awards for it. That allowed us to go into peanut butter bars, peanut butter squares, and et cetera. Our niche was really focused on who's buying, and why are they buying and what's our niche, and how are you going to capitalize on that niche?

Steve Sanduski: Of course, no business ever is a rocket ship from day one. There's always going to be some struggles along the way. So, what was maybe a challenging time that you had as you were building the company, and how did you overcome that?

Jerry Swain: Oh, my gosh. I could spend another two hours on that, Steve. We had lots of challenging times, right? I would say early on, one of the challenges was just innovation and building out the team, right? We had some success because we'd won some international awards, we were featured on the Food Network,

we have some good airings on QVC, Costco had us as a preferred supplier. The growth became a little bit of a rocket ship but an inhibitor. Because every time we grew, we had to buy that much supply more supply, that much more packaging, do that much more planning. And then our customers became more demanding of What's new, what's next, what's different? And so, that put pressure and duress on the company as far as bringing in new talent, bringing in the right talent, and yeah, there's a lot of hiccups that we went through on rushing to bring people in, verses rushing to bring the right people in to help us grow.

That's just one of the challenges. There was supply challenges as well. As a smaller supplier, if there's a shortage, for example, we came out with some tree nut products like an almond cluster, which was an amazing product. We had to buy our almonds and our peanuts and our chocolate on futures. There was a big drought in California, and that's where all the almonds come from in the United States, and the prices went up? Well, the pricing from last year, guess what? They went to the bigger suppliers, right? To the bigger customers. So, the Trader Joe's and the Costcos, and in the Walmarts of the world are going to get those almonds, we're going to get the higher priced almonds. So, we had to pivot, and we had to make adjustments to our business and how we went out to market based upon all these challenges. We couldn't control the drought, we could control some business things, but there were so many external things that affected our business that really built a lot of character in our team.

Steve Sanduski: Now, you eventually sold the company. Why don't you walk us through this process of what caused you to want to sell, and what was the process to have that exit?

Jerry Swain: Yep, we initially built the company to sell. We wanted to create a brand in the industry that was a premium specialty brand, which is a very challenging space in the industry, getting back to how fragmented it is. And so, we knew that was on our horizon. I think we did a really good job of having quarterly planning sessions every quarter annual planning sessions. So, we never took our eye off the ball of what we really needed to do, and what we needed to do to impact the business and grow the value of the brand.

As we got bigger, as the brand got stronger, we started getting some unsolicited offers on the company. So, in the course of about, I would say two plus years, we had four offers in the company. We ended up taking one of the offers and exiting the company at that point. I stayed on for two years to help with the ledger roll up, but it's exactly what we were looking for. It was exciting opportunity for us to see the journey the company go through the process, and to be able to sell it.

Steve Sanduski: And then from there, you now have joined CEO Coaching as one of the coaches here at the company. Tell us a little bit about your thought process. Why did you decide to start working here with CEO Coaching International?

Jerry Swain: Yeah, absolutely. Well, I feel very grateful for the position I'm in to be able to give back not just civically, because I love giving back to the community but to also entrepreneurs and businesses. I'm very passionate about when I hear somebody's story of an emerging company or a fast-growing company and the challenges that they're going through, and if I'm able to share some of the mistakes that I've made and potentially prevent them from making those mistakes, or to be able to share experiences of my journey and what I went through that potentially has value or impact on the business, that's very, very exciting for me. I'm very passionate about seeing people succeed in business to succeed.

What I love about CEO Coaching International and what Mark and the team have done is they built this community of a diversity of coaches. All the coaches are very experienced and successful professionals, but they also have niches in their own talent and experience in. The beautiful thing about that is it's a community where all of us as coaches can tap into each other and learn from each other. When we're working with our clients, we have access to our peers within CEO Coaching as well. I always feel like the clients aren't getting one coach, they're getting a coach, but they're getting the collective knowledge, wisdom and experience from a larger community within CEO Coaching International.

Steve Sanduski: Yeah. I think that's really a great way to frame that in terms of just the collective power of all the people here behind CEO coaching, the experience of everyone, and the ability to tap into that network is just unbelievable. So, there's really no situation that any potential client could run into that has not been addressed by someone on the team. So, real power in that one.

Jerry Swain: Yeah, you're absolutely right.

Steve Sanduski: Yep. Well, great. Well, we're going to do a couple quick things. One is, I want to ask you one final question here. And then we're going to jump into a little rapid-fire session. So, is there anything else that you want to share that we haven't talked about yet?

Jerry Swain: Well, I would say, as I look at business, I always think of the six P's in my mind. People, product, and process, which I think a lot of people are familiar with. As I look back on the business, and I look at as I'm coaching, the people are such a key component to every business. It always amazes me to see how that's a challenging struggle for so many businesses. In fact, just at the CEO Summit market, I asked the audience, "How many people are 100% happy everybody on their team as a nine or a 10?" Not one hand went up in the audience. That was very impactful for me.

The people side of the business is such an important piece of it. And the better you have that dialed in, I think can be really impactful to the business. It was for ours. The product or the service or the niche, I think has always been very key to

be able to differentiate from your competition. And then I was very process-oriented in our business. I think I learned that from IBM as well. That to get more done and get it done quicker and more efficiently, saves money, it's good for the business.

I think the other P's that I'd like to share is ... I didn't do this very well at the beginning, and that was the planning process. I jumped into that Nordstrom meeting and I really didn't plan for that meeting the way I should have or really looked into the packaging that I should have in the industry. I made that mistake several times. Once I got into a better rhythm of regular planning and being accountable for that planning was very important. And then the other two P's are just passionate persistence, which I think a lot of entrepreneurs have in business owners have. But keeping those in mind, all leave to the final P of profit, which we all seek to have in our business.

What I take away from all this is I'm very grateful that I've learned so much from other people in watching and listening and surrounding myself with good folks. That's been really the way I've learned the best.

Steve Sanduski: Excellent. All right. We've got people, product, process, planning, passion/persistence, and then profit. Did I get those six right?

Jerry Swain: You did.

Steve Sanduski: Excellent. All right. I'm a good note taker, because I have a process. All right well let's wrap up here with a few rapid fire questions. The first one I'd like to ask you is who has had the greatest impact on you as a leader?

Jerry Swain: That's a great question. As I just mentioned, there's been so many people, not just in business. I've had so many great business leaders that have had an impact on me, also from philanthropy and civic friends. You can learn from everybody you run across. I think the people that I've been closest to have had tremendous impact. But I would say the one person for me has been my grandpa. As a little boy, he was a man that lived through the Great Depression. I remember as a boy of five, six years old, and all the way into my teens, he would share stories of how they made it through the depression. He was one of nine brothers and sisters, lived in a one-room place in New York City without any heat or cooling during those rough days, and just what he did to survive as a teenager and a young boy.

He ended up putting together a business of men's clothing. As a young boy and into my teens, I got to see him up the facto. The inspiration he had on people, he was such a hard worker. But he treated his team and the factory workers so well that they have so much respect for him. I just love the way that you could feel the aura around his presence, and how he led, how he was honest, how he communicated. He had such an impact on me that right at our front door of our home, I have a quote that he shared with me since I was a young boy until the

day he passed away. I live by that. The quote is, "Never fall victim to loving things and using people. People should be loved, and things should be used."

I always look at that when I walk out the door and it just reminds me of him and just kind of how he lived his life. That people were such an important part of who he was, what he did, and that's how he became such a great leader in what he did, and that things were secondary.

Steve Sanduski: Yeah. What a great story and what a great tribute to your grandfather. So, thank you for sharing that. All right. Another question. How about, what is your story daily habit?

Jerry Swain: That would be that every morning, I'm a morning freak. I get up at 4:35 every morning. I've got a process I go through from working out. But I would say the strangest thing I do, and I've been doing this for over 20 years is I either text, email, or call people on their birthdays and anniversaries. And so, and somebody asked me how many do I do a year recently. I believe it's close to 1300 birthdays or anniversaries a year. There's only a couple days of the year where somebody doesn't have a birthday or anniversary, if you believe it. That's probably the strangest thing that I do.

Steve Sanduski: All right. I love that. Now, I thought I heard embedded in that last answer, was you said that you got up at was at 4:35 in the morning?

Jerry Swain: Yes.

Steve Sanduski: Okay. Not 4:30, but 4:35.

Jerry Swain: That's right.

Steve Sanduski: Okay. And then you also said you have a process. I'd love to hear, is this like a morning ritual?

Jerry Swain: I do. I get up in the morning, and those first 10 minutes, I'm trying to figure out how to make my way to the bathroom and get my clothes and everything. I go to the gym, I come back from the gym. I have my routines at the gym. I come back, and I do the birthday or anniversary calls. I have a gratitude journal that I write something in. And then I have about 20 minutes of just preparing for the day, and it's still quiet right before my kids get up. That sets the tone for the day. I feel like I've gotten my workout in, I got some spirituality in, and I'm ready to tackle the day. That starts at about 6:20.

Steve Sanduski: Excellent. Yeah, so about almost a two-hour routine there then.

Jerry Swain: Yep.

Steve Sanduski: Yeah, perfect. I follow a morning routine as well that's about two hours long, and I'm getting up about the same time that you are, although it kind of varies depending on whenever my body wakes up. But never after five in the morning, but yeah. Thank you for sharing that. All right. A couple more quick questions here. One is, I'm going to start the sentence and I'd like you to finish it. The sentence is, what I know to be true is-

Jerry Swain: Surprises and changes are inevitable in life, and how you handle them can make all the difference.

Steve Sanduski: Okay. And then the second sentence is, the best way to accelerate personal growth is-

Jerry Swain: I'm going to have to reiterate what I said before, and that's spending time with others that will support you, that may have more experience or knowledge than you do in the areas that you want to grow.

Steve Sanduski: Perfect. All right. Well, a great way to wrap up today's show. Jerry, thank you for taking some time to be with us and sharing your story and your wisdom. And, welcome to CEO Coaching International as one of our coaches. The clients are going to be very fortunate to be able to work with you and the rest of the team. Thank you for taking some time with us today.

Jerry Swain: Steve, it's been a pleasure. I really appreciate the time. Thanks so much.

To inquire about our coaching services and programs, please call **1-866-622-9583**.

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