



CEO COACHING
international

5 Ways to Keep Your High-Touch Business Growing

Online and In-Person

Steve Sanduski: Not every entrepreneur starts their first business in their 20s. In fact, today's guest had a long and successful career in corporate America before the entrepreneurial bug and a little push from his spouse caused him to quit and start his own company. Today, he's running a thriving energy company that like many of you, he had to overcome a variety of challenges in this COVID-19 world.

Hi, everybody. Welcome to the CEO Coaching International podcast. I'm your host, Steve Sanduski. And my guest today is Kevin Hamilton. Kevin is a founder of NuEnergen, which is a New York based provider of energy management and consulting services. In today's show, Kevin shares five adjustments his firm had to make due to the pandemic and he shares the thinking behind those changes. And with that, please enjoy my conversation with Kevin Hamilton. Kevin, welcome to the show.

Kevin Hamilton: Hi Steve. Good afternoon. And happy to be here.

Steve Sanduski: Good afternoon to you as well. So really looking forward to our conversation here today. And where I'd like to start is you didn't start out as an entrepreneur. You actually started out in corporate America. So I'm really curious, what made you decide that you wanted to leave the comfort and potential safety of corporate America and go to the wild wild west of becoming an entrepreneur?

Kevin Hamilton: It's a good question. I lay the blame squarely on my wife. We had, let's see, this would have been about circa 2007. And I had finished business school. I had gone back to school. I had worked for large fortune 100 companies in the energy services, energy conservation industry coming out of college, and had always had that inkling to do something entrepreneurial, kept talking about it for many years until one day my wife looked at me and said, "Hey, I don't want to hear you talking about it anymore. You either do it now or never mention it again."

And so she lit the fire under me. We had a mortgage, I think, two very young children at the time in a growing family that soon became four young children.

And I had a good job and decided to leave that all behind and go out on my own, hang up a shingle and get into the energy services industry as an entrepreneur. And I'm so glad that I did.

And so I stayed a bit tongue in cheek with regard to my wife, but in all honesty, I always had that desire to have ownership. And even while I had worked for Honeywell corporation and Duke Energy, a very, very large energy concerns, I always felt fully vested in my work. I worked hard, but it's different when you own it yourself. And I felt as if, having some ownership in an enterprise would be terrific. And on top of that, I thought I could create value for clients.

I saw some opportunities in the marketplace that were not being filled. So that's why we decided to start our company. I ended up forming NuEnergen, our company now with my late brother, Sandy Hamilton. We started that in 07. And here we are 13 years later and a company of about, we're still a relatively small business, 30 people, with a top line of about \$50 million, but with a gold standard of a client portfolio that we're very proud of, and whom we've served for many years.

Steve Sanduski: Well, I love that story. And oftentimes we see that successful entrepreneur is behind a successful entrepreneur is a spouse, someone that's there-

Kevin Hamilton: Indeed.

Steve Sanduski: ... supporting them, but behind the scenes and that's super helpful that you have a supportive spouse that is sort of you a little bit to go out on your own, but I'm sure she's been very helpful behind the scenes as well, to help you do the things that you need to do to help get the business off the ground. So I appreciate you sharing that. And so where we want to really focus today is pretty much every business has been affected by what's happening with COVID-19. And we've had a number of episodes where we've talked to entrepreneurs about how their businesses are adjusting to what is happening here. And I want to explore that with your company as well.

So you're based in New York and New York for a period of time was the epicenter of COVID-19. And so I want to explore, what has your company done? I want to talk about what are you continuing to do? So maybe what are some of the changes you had to make as a result of COVID-19 that may be were temporary? What are some of the changes that you foresee as permanent and how, hopefully has the changes that you've made here actually strengthened your company and made you more resilient going forward? So I think there's a lot that we can explore there. So with that as a setup, what would you say would be maybe the first thing that you've had to adjust here or adapt to this environment?

Kevin Hamilton: So like just about everyone else in business today, NuEnergen faced a whole set of challenges associated with COVID-19. And not only is NuEnergen a New York

based company, but we're actually based in White Plains, New York, which is just a few miles as the crow flies from New Rochelle, New York, which was really ground zero for the breakout of COVID-19 in the metro New York area.

So, if we go back to early March, this entire region of the metropolitan New York area has shut down pretty quickly. And so like just about everyone else, my team had to start working remotely. The biggest challenge that came with that, Steve, is that a very strong point of differentiation for NuEnergen relative to our competition has been a high touch, high serve client services model. It's something I'm very proud of. And it's something that I believe has resulted in our company having an unnaturally high client retention rate.

And so on a quarterly basis we're in front of our clients. We're certainly available physically in front of our clients. We're certainly available to our clients on an as-needed basis via phone, email, and otherwise. But when everyone went remote and most of our clients went remote, of course the face-to-face connectivity was no longer an option. So what we did, which is what the rest of the world did is we started to rely upon technology, upon Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and just good old fashioned phone conversations. And it was a challenge. I was very concerned about it, because I am a believer in that face-to-face, the value of face-to-face conversation and the value of that human to human connectivity that comes from those meetings.

So the quarterly business reviews that we have with our clients had to start to happening remotely, and I was pleasantly surprised to find out that it was okay. So firstly I had to focus on the team and then on the clients. So firstly with the team, we had many members of our team who were worried just as everyone else. Remember back in March, but we really didn't know much about COVID-19. That's certainly not what we know today about it. And there was a lot of fear associated with that unknown.

So we went remote. We saw lots of clients, lots of industries struggling mightily around us. Employees were being furloughed. Some employees were being laid off. I had to pull my team together on a conference call very early on and say, "Folks, it's okay. Our company is strong. We're going to be okay. Our clients are with us. The needs of our clients are greater today than they've ever been."

Incidentally NuEnergen and business is focused on saving our clients money and their energy cost centers. And we saved them far more than what they pay us. So our clients were struggling financially and they needed to rely upon us more than ever. And I wanted my team to know that it was going to be okay, that there were no impending furloughs, there were no impending layoffs, that we were going to get through this and come out the other side of this all right.

And when we had that conversation, as the CEO I could feel that collective exhale, that sigh of relief among members of the team. And I thought that was really important, because then it allowed our team to just focus on our clients.

And there it was all about making sure that whether it was being done remotely or not, we needed to ensure our key deliverables to our clients were in fact delivered to the standard and that we maintain and to their expectation.

And we needed to adapt to our clients. So I thought it was really important more than ever just listen very, very carefully, because many of our clients were struggling. A large set of our customer portfolio are real estate investment trusts, the folks who own the office towers in Manhattan and in other municipal centers around the United States. And as we all know, they're struggling a whole bunch.

We have many hospital clients, dozens and dozens of hospital clients who had to change their operations within a matter of days and weeks to being fully COVID-19 operations. And there were a set of challenges that came with that. Believe it or not, energy related challenges that came with that. So we needed to listen to our clients and adapt to their needs and make sure that they understood more than ever we were present.

And we were, whether it was remote or not, we were going to take care of what we needed to do for them. So that was the first thing. And the NuEnergy remained remote for about three months.

Steve Sanduski: Kevin, I want to go a little deeper on a couple of things that you just said here. So one of them was that you said that you were pleasantly surprised at your ability to conduct business remotely. And I think you indicated that you were pretty much a high touch, high service model. And so you really like the face to face, and it sounds like you were probably concerned when everything had to go remote that, that was going to be a problem. So tell me, how did your thinking change there? Did you learn anything as a leader, as a CEO in terms of the ability to change your mind when new information comes into the picture here?

Kevin Hamilton: Sure. By all means. So, Steve, what I learned was we could still maintain that high degree of high touch, high serve without the face-to-face interaction. And we did that out of necessity. Most of our clients were working but remotely as well. And so, the conversations were taking place. The business reviews were taking place with our clients. And the feedback that I was getting was from our clients directly. And I was having very carefully having conversations with our clients to see what their evolving needs were and to make sure that we were addressing them to the extent we could.

And the feedback that I was getting from our clients was, while we were all still remote, we could deliver the value that they were looking for. And so as the CEO of my organization, we had to learn from that. And even today, all these months later, we are now conducting some face-to-face reviews with our clients, but the majority of it is remote and I feel much more comfortable with it now than I did from the outset of the virus. I was really very concerned about it

because for the prior dozen plus years, our entire emo had been face-to-face interaction and our clients came to expect that. And so we had to shift gears and it's worked. It's worked well so far.

Steve Sanduski: And I think that's one of the really important lessons that's come out of COVID-19 in terms of how leaders are adjusting here is they're realizing that we're resilient. I mean, we do find ways-

Kevin Hamilton: Indeed.

Steve Sanduski: ... to adjust the business and make things work. And I think that's an important lesson that's come out of this. And I think the other thing that you mentioned that I think is very critical is that you gave confidence to your team. I mean, everyone was scared back in March and April, and to this day, I mean, people are still concerned about what's going on here with the virus, but particularly back in the early days, when we had a lot less information than we have today, people were very nervous.

Companies were shutting, the economy was shutting down and yet you were able to give your team the confidence, we're going to be. We're in a business where our clients need us and perhaps need us even more than before because we help them save money. So I think that was important to give them that confidence and then they could get back to work. How about a second item here. What's the second thing that you had to adjust here in recent months?

Kevin Hamilton: So, we had to look at moving forward, how are we going to continue to grow our business? And not withstanding COVID-19. And we had been on a very, very handsome growth trajectory, simply relying upon organic growth since the inception of our business. And that became that much more challenging for us, because it's hard to get a hold of prospective clients. It was more than difficult to have the kinds of conversations that needed to take place. So we decided that we needed to focus more on potential strategic growth opportunities. And I'm glad to say that, that we are presently entertaining two opportunities, one of which is under letter of intent and due diligence is well underway. And I think we'll be closing here in the next six weeks or so.

And I'm really pleased we did that. And that took a measure of just being honest with ourselves, our leadership team, and may saying, "All right, how are we going to push this organization forward? How will we lead it forward on a continued growth trajectory?" And we decided that we knew we had the balance sheet to support acquisition and potential acquisitions. And so we endeavored on that front, and as I say, without disclosing anything I can at this point, we're well on our way to our first acquisition. And we're entertaining a very interesting second one.

Steve Sanduski: Now to make the decision to start an acquisition process as a way to continue to grow the company, was that part of like a strategic planning process? And as

part of COVID-19, did you get your leadership team together and say, hey, we need to sit down. We need to really think through this. We need to be strategic. We need to figure out new ways for us to grow business? Was that the kind of process that you went through, or how did you come to the conclusion that, hey, we need to have a different strategy here to grow?

Kevin Hamilton: It was a combination of conversation, Steve, with our private equity partners, who were fantastic partners and my leadership team. And once again, we had to have this kind of a candid and honest assessment of what we thought that the balance of 2020 was going to look like in this environment where it was difficult to bring onboard new clients, the old fashioned way.

And so we thought there might be some unique opportunities out there on the strategic growth front. And so it was a series of conversations with our private equity partner who were very bullish on the notion and had been for awhile. But I think that really, the biggest trigger came from the leadership team here, myself and the leadership team. And we started spending more time on it. And I think it's going to pan out nicely for us.

Steve Sanduski: And what I like about what you're saying here is it looks like what you did was you said, okay, we've got to take care of our team. We gotta make sure that they're safe, that they're comfortable, that they're confident as they can be under the situation here. Then you said, we got to take care of our clients. We've got to make sure that we don't skip a beat with them. And then you said, okay, we've got those figured out. Now let's look at the business going forward.

How can we think differently? How can we do something different that's going to continue us on the growth trajectory that we were on? So it sounds like you had a fairly well thought out process, maybe in hindsight, it looks thought out, in terms of moving forward. So I think that's, you've done a very nice job in that respect. So we've got a couple of things here.

Kevin Hamilton: Thanks very much.

Steve Sanduski: You adjusted the service model. You actually figured out how can we continue to grow and developed an acquisition strategy. What would be another thing that you had to adjust here in recent months?

Kevin Hamilton: Well, we had to change... well, firstly, we had to come back to the office and which we did and we ended up doing in mid to late June. And NuEnergen, because of the nature of the services that we provide principally to many government entities, including the United States, federal government, the state of New York, City of New York and other government entities, we were considered and are considered an essential business.

And so we had the opportunity to come back to the office. We had been remote for about a dozen weeks and we decided to come back, I know there are

different schools of thought on this. But I really wanted our team back together. Interestingly enough, our team was itching to come back together. Now we did have a few employees who had concerns, which of course we needed to listen to very carefully and we needed to take care of our cherished team.

And so we put in place. So we listened to them. We of course put in place those strategies to mitigate risk associated with being in an office, which is what the whole world is facing these days, such as PPE, social distancing, having a more robust cleaning regimen of the office, things of that kind. And I'm so pleased in hindsight, that everyone came back to the office. I'm speaking to you from a building that's a dozen stories that I think is about 10 to 15% occupied right now. That's it. And we have many clients in New York, including the Empire State, people who own the Empire State Building and the Freedom Tower whose occupancy rates are only 10 to 15% as well.

So much of the rest of the world is still working remote. And I do know there are different schools of thought on this. Some people really enjoy that, like that. I have a very strong bias associated with the benefit of having everyone back together. There's a certain team dynamic that takes place associated with water cooler talk, if you will. And it has played out with our team. Our team is happy to be here.

There has been cases where perhaps a family member of a member of our team became sick or some close associate of theirs they were exposed to who had the virus. And so we've been very, very careful in those cases to make sure that those employees worked remotely, were tested or quarantine for a period of time before coming back. So I would say really NuEnergen has employed kind of a hybrid approach of coming back to the office and having certain select employees work remotely when that made sense. But I'm balanced. I'm very, very pleased that everyone came back. And I think, and again, this sounds counter-intuitive, but our team is pleased to be here as well.

Steve Sanduski: Well, and what I find interesting about that is there is no one size fits all when it comes to-

Kevin Hamilton: Indeed.

Steve Sanduski: ... how this is going to work. So some companies like yours, you've created a culture, like you said early on, it's a high touch, high service model. And so your team, you probably attracted people that wanted to be in that type of environment where people are working together and it is this really team-based model. So that's probably the people you attracted. Other companies, they can work effectively from a decentralized model-

Kevin Hamilton: Absolutely.

Steve Sanduski: ... and that works from them. So I think a key there is just, you've got to decide what works best for your business, what works best for your culture, what works best for the employees that you have in your organization. So no one size fits all there.

Kevin Hamilton: No one size fits. If I may add to that, Steve.

Steve Sanduski: Yeah.

Kevin Hamilton: No one size fits all. I agree 100% with that notion. And at the same time, there are certain members of the team for whom not being here works better than being here. And so I think just being flexible and adaptable to those situations is a good thing as well.

Steve Sanduski: Excellent. How about a fourth thing that you may have to adjust here?

Kevin Hamilton: We had to adjust our sales model a bit. I mentioned to you already that we're struggling with our organic growth objectives. So we started looking at strategic growth opportunities, but at the same time, my vice president of client services and marketing and I, and our chief financial officer thought, there's an opportunity here to make investments in organic growth, and especially considering the needs of our target market segments that we should consider.

And so we decided to invest in some lead generation top of the funnel sales activity, if you will, lead generation support because our client services managers who are our business development folks were struggling, as I said earlier in trying to bring new business into the company. So we invested in a lead generation company, and they've been underway now for a few weeks and I'm very, very happy to see the results already.

We've gotten leads from this, leads within the target market segments that NuEnergen finds very attractive, and where we believe we can provide the most value. And so that was one area. Again, we've actually, we have the cashflow and the financial performance and the balance sheet to support making that kind of an investment. So sales lead generation, and we decided that it was time to refresh our marketing initiatives.

So we have begun a fresh digital campaign, and refreshed all of our marketing collateral. And so I would just say, in summation, we decided to make some, what I think are prudent and wise investments in sales and marketing that will pay off going into Q1 of next year, and for the balance of next year on the organic growth side. So that was one step change that we made associated with COVID-19 as well.

Steve Sanduski: So in terms of this outside company that's the increasing the top of the funnel for you, tell me a little bit more about how that works. Can you explain what

that firm is doing, how far they're taking the lead versus when they actually hand over to you to maybe finally close the sale? How does that work?

Kevin Hamilton: So they're making the phone calls. They're trying to find the right person within the prospect of organization to speak to. They're having the initial conversation with that person, or the agreement that, that person would be available to a member of our team to have a conversation. And then once that lead comes into our sales team, a member of our sales team schedules a call with that person and the process begins.

Their process is also incorporated into our CRM tool. So all of the relevant data is captured. And for follow on in the future, as you might expect, there's certain prospects who say, now's not a good time, but at the end of Q1 next year is a good time, things of that kind of that nature. And so all of that is tracked in our CRM tool as well.

So the lead generation activity, it starts with a simple email and phone call outreach, lots of it. And then once the right person is identified and contacted, then it's passed through to a NuEnergy client services manager for follow-up. And they've just begun. And we've already got calls scheduled with the large companies, fortune 500 type organizations to have conversations about how NuEnergy and can help them better manage their energy cost center.

Steve Sanduski: So a couple of questions-

Kevin Hamilton: So I'm very positive about this. I'm sorry, go ahead.

Steve Sanduski: Just two more questions on that. One is you mentioned the CRM system. So what actual CRM system are you using?

Kevin Hamilton: We use HubSpot and we have for many years and it's worked out nicely for us.

Steve Sanduski: And then in terms of how you pay this outside firm, you don't need to tell me the actual amount that you pay them, but are they paid on a per lead that they generate or per closed sale or a percentage of the revenue? How does that work?

Kevin Hamilton: They're paid a fee. We have KPI set up and really, it's just going to come down to, how many leads, how many appointments are we getting out of their efforts? And over a period of time, quarter to quarter, my leadership team will be able to assess if we're getting value from the investment being made. And so it is not a being paid per lead or per revenue structure, but rather it's, they're being paid a fee for the suite of services they're providing us.

Steve Sanduski: Excellent. So we've gone through four adjustments here that you made. Are there any other adjustments that you made here lately?

Kevin Hamilton: One other thing is, we've... and I've done this particularly with the leadership team, is that placed the higher emphasis on top grading this year. It's ever more important, I think, particularly in this environment to make sure that you have the right people in the right positions in order to carry your organization forward. And so we have hired some new individuals this year, and we took advantage of the fact that, one key member of our team was moving on to greener pastures and that had been planned for a couple of years.

So it was not an unplanned event. And we're just placing a higher emphasis on making sure that we have the right people in the right roles. And as the CEO, I can say categorically that's important. It makes my life a lot easier when I can rely upon people who know what they're doing.

Steve Sanduski: Now, you mentioned the word topgrading. So explain that. What is that?

Kevin Hamilton: Topgrading is really a philosophy of having A-players on your team, irrespective of what role they're in. So if you think at it in the context of, if you were to assess the capabilities of members of your team as kind of either an A or a B or a C individual player, you're really trying to get A-players. And, every organization, as we know, might have B players, the C players either, one has to either develop and give them the opportunity to succeed and nurture them along.

And if that doesn't work out for them or for the company, then you try to make sure that you're filling those key roles, really actually all the roles through the whole organization was A and B players. And so it's just kind of a philosophy of making sure that you have an effective team.

Steve Sanduski: And within this context of topgrading, are there one or two key characteristics or traits that you as the CEO are looking for when you're hiring a new person in the organization, maybe it's because it's specific to the culture that you've created, or what are one or two of those key things that you're trying to find in the new people that you bring into the organization that you think are important markers of whether or not they're going to be successful?

Kevin Hamilton: So I think, because we're relatively small company, Steve, and because our clients are relatively demanding of us, I think it's really important for me as the CEO to surround myself with a diversity of thinking, diversity of opinions, and individuals. And so I'm looking for individuals who are not afraid to stand up and be heard. And if they have an opinion that's divergent from me or others, they have to speak up and feel comfortable that their opinion matters.

And so I'm not looking for yes people, for sure. I'm looking for people who are unafraid in identifying issues and recommending solutions and who have a kind of an entrepreneurial mindset of just because things were done a certain way in the past doesn't mean they should be done the same way in the future. And

also who have that mindset of, you can be a lower level data analysts, or you can be the executive VP and GM of the largest business unit of our business.

If you have an idea, if you see a business opportunity that you think might be worth exploring, whether it's product expansion, geographic expansion, whatever the case may be, strategic acquisition, don't be afraid to say so, and work on it, come to us with those ideas. And together we'll decide that the best course of action. So I'm looking for creativity in individuals and folks who are willing to be heard.

Steve Sanduski: Well, you mentioned this idea of divergent opinions, and you're not looking for yes men. And I just want to double click on that for a second, because I think that's so important, because there are leaders out there who they want people to tell them what they want to hear as opposed to what they should hear. And I think it takes a good leader, a great leader who's willing to hear opinions that may be different from what the leader thinks, and to have that open mind, to be receptive, to hearing other ideas that might differ from what you think I think is critical.

You may not always agree with what the other person says, but just to know the other side of the coin, so to speak so that you can make a more informed decision, I think is important. And so I'm glad that you shared that because I think that's a trait that not everyone has these days.

Kevin Hamilton: I agree entirely. I think it's shortsighted for any leader to surround herself or himself with folks who just are going to tell you what they think you want to hear. In fact, it's dangerous. You're going to miss opportunities and you're going to incur liabilities when people tell you what they think you want to hear, versus having a really strong diversity of opinions surrounding you.

From my own standpoint, my approach when facing certain problems or questions is I welcome a two or three or four different answers or potential solutions to any one question. I welcome kind of pondering diversion thinking and having a respectful conversation about it. And then deciding what I think is the best path forward. And so you're right. Some individuals are not comfortable with taking that approach. But I think the better approach for any organization is to make sure that you have diversity of thinking, diversity of cultural backgrounds, diversity of many elements within your organization. And at the end of the day, you stronger as a result more effective and better.

Steve Sanduski: And I know some companies go so far as to in say strategic planning meetings, they would have someone who is designated to be the devil's advocate, someone that is said, hey, poke holes in this. We're about to make a decision here. Tell me the worst case. What am I not seeing here? Why is this a bad decision? And so that way you really get the extremes. You say, hey, this is why we want to do this. This is all the positive. And then someone else gives you just the opposite and says, here's where this could go wrong.

As we get ready to wrap up here, I just want to quickly summarize if I took some good notes here, it looks like you came up with five different points here in terms of some of the adjustments that you've made in recent months due to the environment here with COVID-19.

So one is, you had to adjust your client service model, which pretty much everyone's been doing. A second thing is, you had to figure out how are we going to grow again? And so you looked into, and you're in the process of making an acquisition. So looking at inorganic ways to grow. Was this a thing that you did here? Third was, you brought your team back into the office and you were one of the first companies to do that, particularly in New York. And so you had some challenges there, but you figured out how to make that work.

Fourth thing is that you changed your sales models. So in addition to doing the inorganic growth strategy, you had to figure out how could you actually continue to grow in the way that you were doing before, but figure out a different way to make that work better in this environment. And you did some outsourcing there. And then this last point we were just talking about was this idea of this importance of really hiring the A-plus staff, using this as an opportunity to revisit that and make sure that you are emphasizing having the absolute best people possible on the team. So all great points there. All right. Well, Kevin, as we wrap up here, just a couple of quick things. So one is, is there anything else that you want to share here that we haven't already talked about?

Kevin Hamilton:

Yeah. I think just two things, very briefly. Firstly, everything that you just mentioned there can, I think be encapsulated by a philosophy, a mindset of we can shape and create our destiny. So in other words, when there are dark clouds on the horizon, like a global pandemic, that doesn't mean we cannot still shape and create our destiny. And sure, life can happen. It does happen. Things happen beyond our control and you just deal with that as it comes.

But life can also happen the way we make it want to be. And I think that, that kind of optimistic sense of possibility is really important for leaders of any organization, particularly when you're facing the kind of challenges that we're all facing in the United States today, and indeed around the world. Secondly, I just want to mention very, very briefly, I personally have relied handsomely upon CEO Coaching International over the past year or so.

A gentleman by the name of Michael Marchy has been coaching me. And I have found that to be very, very helpful and constructive thing to do. And so I encourage those who may be listening to this podcast at some point in the future, CEOs and otherwise, and other leaders within organizations is to find strong coaches or mentors, for whom you can bounce ideas off and have the kinds of conversations with whom you can have the kinds of conversations that you otherwise would not have with members of your own team. So I found that to be a very constructive thing to do.

Steve Sanduski: All right. So let's just wrap up here with a few rapid fire questions. So the first one is, who has had the greatest impact on you as a leader?

Kevin Hamilton: Without question, my late father. His name was Sandy Hamilton. And he taught me the value of virtue and honesty and being kind to others and humility. And those are traits that I think any good leader needs to carry. And so he has impacted me in that regard and in a very meaningful way.

Steve Sanduski: Excellent. And I'm sure he'd be very proud of how you were carrying on from what you learned from him. So thank you for sharing that. All right. How about what is something that you're reading right now?

Kevin Hamilton: So I just began a book by gentlemen who is a Holocaust survivor. His name is Viktor Frankl and it's entitled, Man's Search for Meaning. And it's been really an inspirational read so far for me. And the gist of the book is how one can find dignity in life, irrespective of how inhumane the circumstances were in a place like the Holocaust. And it's been very interesting reading this far. I've just begun the book. I'm not too far into it. But it's very good so far.

Steve Sanduski: Well, many people would say that that's probably one of the top 100 books of the last 100 years. So we'll definitely link to that in the show notes at ceocoachinginternational.com. All right. So one final question here is, so your company has grown, and as the company has grown, you're the founder, you're the CEO. You have to let go of things as you grow. So what have you found is one of the hardest things that you've had to let go of?

Kevin Hamilton: Without question, client services. So that customer facing activity with our clients. I've been in, when I started right out of college, as my professional career has always been focused on sales and sales leadership roles prior to executive leadership roles. And I just really enjoy the face time with the clients. I enjoy listening to them. I love serving our clients. I know that may sound trite, but I really do. And I had to, as we grew, as our client portfolio grew, to hundreds, certainly I'm not involved with all of our clients and I needed to rely upon our team to handle that. And I struggled with that. I'll be very candid, but I knew it was important as we continue to grow, to place my faith in others, to maintain that critical client service provider relationship. So I would say client services.

Steve Sanduski: Kevin, well, I think we will leave it there. So I appreciate you spending some time with us here today and sharing your story and sharing your wisdom that you've learned here over the decades in business. So great story to tell. And I appreciate that. If anyone wants to connect with you, what's the best way for someone to reach out to you or learn more about your company?

Kevin Hamilton: They can go to nuenergen.com. That's N-U-E-N-E-R-G-E-N. Our contact information is there, and I'd be happy to speak with anyone about what we do

for our clients. And Steve, I've very much enjoyed my time with you. I appreciate this conversation and I wish you the very best in this.

Steve Sanduski: All right. Thanks, Kevin. Appreciate it.

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