

Becoming a D.W.I.T.

By Charles S. Stuart

It was a hot, muggy August day in Gainesville, Florida...

As a non-scholarship football player in 1969, I had "walked on" to play for the University of Florida Gators. An all-region performer in high school, my season had ended with a severe knee injury and surgery. After a summer filled with rehab work, I called the head coach and asked if I could try out. "Of course, Charlie," Coach Ray Graves said. "But, we heard you were injured and couldn't play football anymore."

But, there I was on a hot, muggy, August day for preseason practice. The first week of two-a-day practices was without pads, in shorts and helmet only. One thing I noticed was that football players in shorts look very different from one another. At 6' 4", 198 pounds, I looked thin to be playing offensive tackle. It was hard to see me from sideways on. I looked puny, especially when standing next to some of the larger, senior players. When we put on full pads, that perspective of differing size was gone. Football players in pads look the same size. But, they aren't.

On the first play from scrimmage on the first day wearing pads, I lined up across from one of those players who, I knew, was just plain bigger than me. You see, back in high school, I had slept through most of the physics courses, so I didn't understand the theory of mass times velocity equals momentum. But, all the physics I will ever need to know I learned that first day of pads.

Across from me was a defensive end on the first team varsity. The freshman team was privileged to practice against the first team because "we had team unity and desire", or because we were just too scared and dumb to know any better.

This defensive end was 6' 5" tall. He weighed 255 pounds. He was the strongest player on the team. And, that's the good news, because he was also one of the fastest players on the team. His name was Jack Youngblood. You've probably heard of him. Jack would go on to a distinguished career in the National Football League playing for the Los Angeles Rams and a well-deserved place in the National Football League Football Hall of Fame.

As an offensive tackle, on a pass play my mission was to keep the defensive end from hitting the quarterback before the ball was thrown. I had to delay him for three seconds — less time than it took for you to read this sentence. The defensive end's mission was to defeat me and hit the quarterback before the ball was thrown. So, we had the classic battle of the irresistible force and the immovable object. Except the immovable object, me, was outweighed by the irresistible force, Jack, by over 50 pounds. And, with his speed — well, you remember the physics lesson?

On that first play, Jack reached out with both arms, grabbed my shoulder pads, lifted my feet clear off the ground, carried me back into the backfield, and threw me down on top of the quarterback — whomp! All this in less than three seconds — less time than it took you to read the last sentence. The embarrassment was worse than the pain.

Less than a minute later, we lined up again to run the same play. This time I knew what to expect, because I had learned that if I tried to use my size against his, he would win every time. Yet, I still had the same mission.

Then I had a thought, "What's missing on a practice football field? — Referees!" And, it's referees that define the rules of the game.

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On that next play, as Jack rushed, with mayhem on his mind, I realized that he was wearing low-top, light-weight, kangaroo-leather shoes — useful for running speed. I, on the other hand, was wearing high-top, leather boots with 3/4" steel-tipped cleats.

And, as we tangled — in that instant before Jack could grab my shoulder pads and lift me off the ground — I raised my right foot and, knowing there was a two out of three chance of hitting something that didn't belong to me, stomped my foot down, very hard, and hit my target — Jack's toe. It worked! My mission was accomplished.

Jack didn't hit the quarterback — he hit me. Again and again. For longer than three seconds — in fact, for as long as it took you to read this story.

And, at that moment, I became a **D. W. I. T.** — someone who will **Do What It Takes!**

"Commitment" is necessary to change and grow into a relationship building expert. Commitment to "practice perfectly" new interpersonal skills. Commitment to do the unpopular. Commitment to lead the peer group in your company, not follow. Commitment to write "thank you" letters every time a customer or prospect is served. Commitment to set an example for the next generation of professionals within the firm. Commitment to make the calls, write the letters, go to the lunches, face the dreaded "no" and still come back for more.

Commitment is a strong word, and in today's competitive business world, it is often a person's commitment to excellence that makes the difference between failure and success.

On a practice football field there are no referees...there are no rules. But, in the life of a relationship "Marketing Marine" there are many ethical considerations. Many times we are faced with the question "What should I do or not do to achieve my goals?" The answer to this question can be found by understanding the "box of life."

Each of us live our lives within a "box of life" that has three dimensions. These dimensions, defining our ethics, morals and spiritual values set the boundaries of our professional life. Most professionals, particularly the younger, more aggressive "up & comers" need special help to shape their "box" and to clearly define the edges of their "box."

Just like a child who doesn't understand the dangers of the busy street, but knows that crossing the "no-no line" means a spanking, a professional must know where he or she can go or not go ethically. The challenge of the "box of life" in relationship building is to include marketing activities and philosophies within your "box."

Too often, people feel that using aggressive relationship marketing skills is not ethical. I admit that, just like any other skill that can be employed as the person sees fit, there is potential for the misuse of relationship marketing skills to achieve an objective.

If it is the right thing to do to influence someone to choose your firm, then you will learn every skill available, within your "box of life", to encourage others to make the right choice.

With a clear understanding of the limits placed by your "box of life" comes the freedom to do whatever it takes within that "box" to achieve your personal goals, and the firm's goals.

A committed professional will **Do What It Takes** — to climb the ladder to reach success, becoming a **D.W.I.T.**

This means you must first have the courage to believe that influencing others is good. Second, it means the commitment of time and energy to learn and practice the necessary actions vital to relationship building success. Third, it means having the patience to let time and the techniques work in your favor.

"Pay any price — no cost is too high — get the customer!" These are sayings that should be considered sacred as long as they are anchored in your "box of life." Of course, you can not take them literally. One million dollars is too much to pay to get a ten thousand dollar customer. But, if a prospect is someone you want as a customer, you should be willing to focus your resources to make that happen.

"Patience is a virtue" may be true in interpersonal relationships. In relationship marketing, it is an absolute requirement. Because customers make their decision to change at their own pace — patience is necessary to allow time for the techniques to work. My wife tells a story about a public relations professor she had in college. He said, "Public relations is a lot like making pickles. You don't just squirt a little vinegar on cucumbers. You have to let `em soak for a while."

Likewise, you have to let your techniques soak in. This is especially true with a service-oriented customer where, once the company has the customer, the relationship will likely last months or years. The long-term nature of a service-oriented customer relationship provides the time to re-coup the investment of patience.

D.W.I.T.'s can be v-e-e-r-y patient.

The whole objective in relationship marketing is to grow the relationship into a friendship based on integrity. By great persistence, you will reach this position, and greatly enhance your posture and raise your chance of being selected to serve.

Be a D.W.I.T.!