



February 19, 2008

Nate Vogel  
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Dear Nate,

I hope all is well with you! I always enjoy reconnecting with Southwestern folks. I thought I'd put some thoughts down on paper to share how Southwestern has had a long term impact on me, both professionally and personally.

I sold books for four summers while at Stanford University. Southwestern became a bit of a family affair in my family, as I was recruited by my cousin Stuart Newton who sold for 6 summers while at San Diego State University. Then, I recruited both my sisters to sell: Susie from Duke and Tracy from Cornell.

While at Southwestern, I learned an immense amount about hard work, dedication, perseverance, attitude, as well as basic professional and communication skills. Looking back, it is amazing how many life skills I learned in my summers selling books. These skills have served me well at work, with my family, and in all my relationships.

In the professional world, I have had a number of positions in sales, consulting and management. Many people live their life just "getting by", but Southwestern taught me to always finish strong and strive for my best. Keeping positive was also a huge life lesson, and I often have to remind myself that I control my own thoughts, behavior, and emotions.

Southwestern taught me tons about communication: how to effectively communicate with others and how to "read between the lines". These skills have clearly helped me when dealing with executives, with co-workers, with customers, and even with my family. My friends used to wonder if I had ESP, and my kids are always asking me "Mommy, how did you know that?" When we just moved to a new area, my children couldn't figure out how I knew exactly which houses had children of which ages, where the old people lived, etc. When talking to over thirty families per day, I learned how to be perceptive, ask questions, listen effectively, and decipher body language to really understand what people are thinking. This clearly helps not only in my current sales position, but also in parenthood, management, negotiations, and all other types of interpersonal relationships.

Currently, within my team at work, I emphasize that success relies on a few basics. In my opinion, the keys to success include: 1) ability and willingness to consistently work hard, 2) great communication skills, 3) the drive and passion to succeed, and 4) a positive attitude. Think about what we learned at Southwestern with the Gold Seal Gold awards, 30+ demos per week, emphasis on a staying positive, and finishing strong with "I Wanna Win." In fact, I just hired another salesperson for Tableau Software. This position requires that the salesperson works hard making 50+ calls per day, do 10+ demos per week, has excellent communication skills, and perseverance and a strong desire to succeed both personally and as a team. What better qualification for this role than someone who has sold books!

I so value what I learned selling books, as I not only learned these principles of success, but I also learned how to run my own business, how to foster positive relationships, and how to manage people. It was nice to also take home over \$120,000 to pay for my Stanford education nearly 20 years ago. That was a lot more money than my friends made at their summer jobs. In fact, this money not only paid for my undergraduate education and much of my Wharton MBA, but also helped pay the down payment for my first home in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Nate, thank you for continuing to help college students have these same opportunities that I did. I am very thankful for Southwestern for providing such a positive and enriching experience.

Take Care,  
Kelly Wright  
Summers of 1988-1992