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Business and Character Development

Why is business important? Perhaps because people are affected by decisions businesses make all the time. We all work for or with businesses every day that affect our lives in a variety of ways. It was the year two thousand fourteen, a time marked with fear of Ebola outbreaks, the ALS challenge, and the iPhone 6. Yet, I was drawn to a different path, one that shaped my understanding of success and the pursuit of knowledge beyond the classroom. In the midst of a world consumed by global chaos and social descent, my path into the realm of business began in the most unlikely of places, a quaint neighborhood untouched by the chaos and turmoil of the outside world. At the tender age of thirteen, I started down my own path. My journey in business did not stem from textbooks, lectures, or a genuine desire to explore this field. It began with a venture into hacking, modifying, and selling content from popular video games and apps. From there, I got my first taste of money and what it would take to get it. Surprisingly, what it took to run a well-oiled business is very similar to what it takes to maintain a happy and healthy life. Years later, at sixteen, I shifted focus to more legitimate and consistent business ventures, selling things online, also known as e-commerce. Here is where I learned why business is important: it showed me that networking, building systems, and relationship management are important traits. Not only in life but certainly in business. Embracing business early in my life was no mistake; it taught me many lessons that strengthened my character. For this reason, I’m in favor of business over other hobbies or uses of time because of how it can improve one’s character and understanding of the world. Networking is an important tool that we all use in one form or another to achieve the things we want. In life and in business, it is no different. With proper networking, I can make things that are meant to be very hard and arduous very simple and easy by knowing the right people. However, relationship management is also a key aspect of business; some would even say it is the currency of business. A powerful relationship or enemy can make or break a business. Lastly, building systems is a skill many overlook, though it is the most important. Building proper systems in business and in life can alleviate stress for all involved and promote consistency, which builds structure.

To begin with, networking is an important tool that we all use in one form or another to achieve the things we want in life, and business is no different. With proper networking, I can make things meant to be hard and arduous very simple and easy just by knowing the right people. For example, when I started my first online store, I did not have prior knowledge of the market, so I had no advantage, no edge, no way to know what was selling, causing me to lose money testing out different products. Over time, I would watch videos on how to sell better and leave comments on those videos, asking questions to those more experienced than me. Eventually, I started to get helpful responses, but that wasn’t enough for me. I wanted to know more, so I developed personal relationships with these men and began asking them what they were selling. This changed the game for me as I now had inside knowledge, meaning I now had an edge that allowed me to make my first five thousand a month from my bedroom at sixteen. This showed me networking is a powerful tool that can save me countless amounts of time. It also helped me build social skills, confidence, a sense of community, and showed me the strength of a strong network.

Next, building systems is a skill many overlook. Building proper systems in a business and in life can alleviate stress and ensure consistency, not only for me but for customers and employees alike. In my previous paragraph, I mentioned how a strong network carried me to my first profits; well, how could I have secured those profits without a system in place to collect the payments? Or a system to acquire customers? The simple answer is that without systems a business fails, and so does one’s life without proper structure, which is what a system provides. It is the proper blueprint for a given task. For example, many parents do not allow their children outside past a certain time. This is a system. Now, children without that system may be more vulnerable to adopting nefarious behaviors due to the lack of a strong system that limits those outcomes. All in all, building systems makes things easier for everyone involved. Without systems in place, a business cannot function optimally, just as without structure a person does not develop properly.

Furthermore, relationship management is another key aspect of business. Some would even call it the currency of business because of how much it can make or break a business. A real-world example would be Myspace vs. Facebook. While Myspace was a pioneer in the social networking scene, over time it became a gimmick due to its poor relationship management with its users, leading to the rise of Facebook, which was newer, focused more on the user, and the relationships between users on the platform. This relates strongly to life because without proper relationship management skills, I will find it hard to achieve the things most people want, like children and family. So, from this, I see that poor relationship management can wipe out a business and empower the competitors. If not cared for, it can cause interpersonal relationships to suffer.

In conclusion, embracing business taught me many lessons that changed and strengthened my character. For these reasons, I am in favor of business over other uses of time because of how it can improve one’s character and understanding of the world. To recap, I learned networking is a powerful tool that, if used correctly, can cause accelerated growth in business and character, increase confidence, increase social skills, and provide a sense of community. Next, I learned building proper systems aids all those involved and increases consistency, which promotes strong character and structure. We know without strong character a society falls into descent. Lastly, and most importantly, with relationship management, I learned that without proper maintenance of relationships, just like Myspace faded into irrelevancy and Facebook took its place, potentially, if I treated my relationships poorly, every friend or love interest in my life could disappear, all because of poor relationship management skills. I genuinely believe four years spent learning, starting, and running a business is more valuable than a four-year degree in a non-stem field, due to the harsh reality of the world it exposed me too, as well as the lessons I learned to combat these realities in real time.