

Speaking from Experience

There is nothing in my post-driving career that I cherish more than watching good people succeed, secure in the knowledge that I may have had a hand in their success. I've found fulfillment in challenging the quality individuals around me to take on tasks or opportunities that they feel might be beyond their capabilities. My role has been to support these people, to challenge their logic and then watch as they strove to become proficient at a new task. These people all had talent and ambition but needed a small kick in the rear, a pat on the back for encouragement and an opportunity. I know this because these were the challenges I experienced in my own career.

One of my greatest obstacles in business was overcoming a lack of confidence in myself. Those who know me well will be surprised to hear that for years I was intimidated by academics who had education that I did not. My grade eleven accomplishment just didn't cut it in my mind. I assumed these academics had some deeper thinking process than my own so I would often sit on my proverbial opinion and say nothing for fear of embarrassing myself. It took quite awhile for me to realize that nothing...and I mean nothing... is worth more than common sense and a good gut instinct. Once I came to this realization everything became a great deal easier for me; the people I once

feared now became intricate parts of a winning team. Their counsel was sought but decisions became mine as I began to trust my years of experience in this industry.



Two critical things happened that helped me overcome my fears. The first was taking a management course called MBR (Management By Responsibility). I absorbed the teachings of this eight-session training like a sponge; it explained many things about my peers and my direct reports. I learned that the ultimate level of performance is that of the responsible person, one who is confident in his or her own behaviour and actions; one who is benign to the criticisms of others as much as one can be open to other opinions, focused on the critical issues at hand and showing concern for the people around them. This person balances family and business, giving each the measured attention they deserve. The second critical event was seeking the help of a mentor, which in my case was a business coach. Over and over I heard the same thing...trust your gut feeling, think an issue through and then when decision time comes, go with your instincts.

I guess where I am going with all of this is to recognize that our

industry has not done enough to promote career paths for its people. This thought pattern has never sat quite right with me. I believe that we each are in the space we're in right now because that's where we're comfortable. For some of us, that space is on the edge, always challenging ourselves to find new experiences. Others may be quite comfortable to occupy the space they are currently living in and to stay that way. There is no right or wrong to this thinking and at the end of the day finding happiness is always the toughest challenge and for each of us that happiness looks a little different. That's what makes the world go around.

If you are looking for a career path in trucking it is available but the career begins with you. If you want to get out from behind the wheel and take a crack at operations, recruiting, safety, or anything else that interests you, it is up to you to take the first step. Perhaps you are a company driver longing to be an owner operator. Don't wait for someone or something to come along and make it happen for you; it won't happen unless you take it upon yourself to make change happen.

Ask the company you work for if they hire from within the ranks and, if so, do they support additional training to help transition folks into

new roles? If they don't, you might want to look for a company who does. I was always proud to tell our new hires at MacKinnon Transport that Bill and Evan MacKinnon and myself were all former drivers and that we welcomed their ideas and comments. That's how we got to where we are now; ex-drivers fill many roles in the MacKinnon organization.

If you want change, get in the game. Plot a course of action and execute. Find a mentor, take a self-improvement course, read books on self-improvement or books by people who have become successful and have overcome the odds. You are only limited by your own self-doubt! Take a chance; it's what makes life interesting.

"It's not the size of the dog in the fight but the size of the fight in the dog." I don't know who originally came up with this verse but I have always liked that line of thinking. If you want to change your current situation, plot a course and get at it. God bless if you are one of the fortunate ones who are happy and content in your current lifestyle. You are at the responsible level and you have my respect.

Safe driving,

Ray Haight 🍁

Career Path