

# ShopTalk



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## We're Only Human

You hear the names Pablo Picasso, Rupert Murdoch and Walt Disney, and you think they have something special, some secret ingredient that helped them achieve worldwide fame and riches. And it's easy to believe you cannot achieve similar success because you are hiding a secret about yourself. One of those secrets you tell no one about, not your mother, your spouse or even your best friend.

Everyone has their secrets. Success doesn't come from the lack of those secrets. It comes in spite of them.

Pablo Picasso was arguably the greatest artist of the 20th century. He was the most prolific painter in history, and his art documented the psyche of a troubled world. Yet he violated all rules of decorum and behavior, leaving a trail of death and destruction with several mistresses and two wives, one who committed suicide.

Rupert Murdoch dominates the newspaper, television (Fox) and book publishing industries in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. In the process, he has destroyed many competitors, has laid off thousands of people from their jobs and has disrupted every established provider of news and entertainment in the world.

Walt Disney smoked three packs of cigarettes a day. He was a perfectionist who often said "I prefer animals to people." He lived in an apartment on Main Street USA during Disneyland's construction to ensure perfection of the life he wanted to create for himself, a utopian life of a happy child without any problems, all while trying to deal with his own suicidal tendencies.

I'm not making this up. These profiles, along with those of 11 other successful people, are detailed in the book *Profiles of Power and Success* by Gene Landrum, Ph.D. In the book, Dr. Landrum profiles 14 geniuses who broke the rules.

For too many of us, our decisions are limited to those within a certain box. We

operate within tight confines of our own construction. We have put ourselves inside the box, and we don't even realize it.

I hear things like these said in coaching meetings all the time:

"My customers won't pay it if I increase my prices."

"I've been running my shop this way for 37 years; I must be doing something right."

"It's impossible to find good employees."

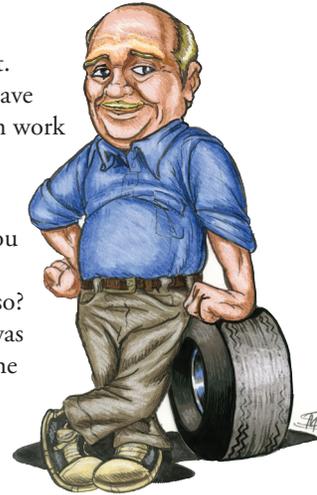
"There's no way my wife is going to let me do that."

"This is the way my family has been doing things for decades; there's no way you know more than my daddy about running a repair shop."

What's even more dangerous are the statements thought, but never said out loud. Were you surprised to hear that Walt Disney had suicidal tendencies? It was well documented during his life, although you won't find a mention of it at Disney.com, I can guarantee you. It's more common than you think. So if you need help, get it. Don't beat

yourself up about it. Successful people have self-doubts. You can work through them, too.

Are you difficult to deal with? Do you think you are more difficult than Picasso? Probably not. He was successful because he ignored self-doubt, ignored criticism and did great work anyway.



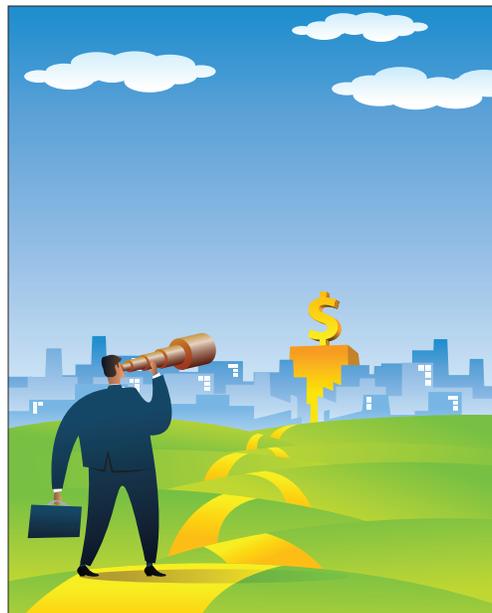
Did Rupert Murdoch allow the traditional distribution networks of news to limit his thinking? Did he say "I can't create a fourth television network because there are already three huge giants?" No, he created Fox anyway. He succeeded because he took on convention and beat the giants ABC, CBS and NBC. Today, Murdoch is the giant, and the rest play catch-up.

Same with you.

Don't allow your past limitations, your past thinking and your box to get in the way of making the changes you need to make. Rather than tell yourself that something won't work, try it. Maybe the last time you tried it, it didn't work, but now it does.

And whatever your secrets may be, they aren't what is preventing you from achieving success. What you are saying to yourself about your secrets is what is preventing you from becoming successful.

Lift yourself up, give yourself a chance and step away from where you are comfortable. Your coach is there to help you through the scary parts to become the person everyone talks about. The one they talk about when they say "Wow, he achieved all that, and he didn't have anything handed to him. He had to go out and earn it. Great job!" **ATI**



## After 43 Years, Doug Hillmuth Still Sees the Value in Continued Training and Coaching



Doug Hillmuth owns and operates Hillmuth Certified Automotive in Glenwood, Md. He's also a lifelong learner whose automotive education began in a gas station while he was still in high school.

"I've been in this business 43 years," Doug says. "I worked in a gas station as a teenager, went to technical school after high school and then worked on cars for 14 years before I opened my first location in 1978."

Doug and his brother started their business from scratch with money Doug borrowed with an equity loan on his home. He was, as they say, "all in." Doug says he wasn't stressed out by that.

"It was fun because I enjoyed what we were doing," Doug recalls. "I was in business. It wasn't about the money. It was about making a difference in the trade. My profession deserved more than it had gotten as far as how the press reported on it. I wanted people that worked for me to be proud of me, wanted my customers to know they were going to get good service and that they could trust me. I wanted my peers in the business to look up to us. So that was my goal."

Doug began working with Chris Frederick in the early 1980s. He went to various ATI classes and then joined ATI coaching about eight years

ago. As Doug puts it, he had been "going to school for 38 years" and still didn't have enough training.

"We were still growing, and so I needed more leadership training," Doug explains. "I had young kids coming up in the business, and I wanted to be able to grow in my own knowledge to be able to help them, to coach them."

One of the biggest changes Doug implemented as a result of ATI coaching was to incentivize his technicians' and other employees' compensation by having them share in the profits of the business.

"Using ATI's compensation model made our employees more accountable," Doug says. "I saw them grow in their profession, in how they responded to their jobs. They were getting more serious."

Some employees, especially those who had been in the business for many years, feared this change to Hillmuth's compensation program, and Doug turned to his ATI coach to help explain the new program.

"I've got people with 15, 18, 19 years, and so there's a big fear of changing," Doug explains. "Before, we paid them a straight salary. They still have a salary under our new plan, but now it's got more on the incentive side of it. My coach helped communicate the changes with pre-meetings, talking to them about it and monitoring it the first few months."

Doug reports that the transition went smoothly, he has added more profit to the bottom line and his people are now more accountable for their work. Plus, Doug and his brother have more free time, time they spend, in part, with their peers within ATI.

"Because my brother and I have more free time, we're able to make new acquaintances with our peers and share a lot of different knowledge with others," Doug says. "We have time to go to the ATI conventions, and it's helped us grow in a lot of respects seeing what other people do, sharing ideas."

Hillmuth Certified Automotive is a true family business, with Doug and his brother as owners, Doug's son who has been in the business for 24 years and a nephew who has been full-time for eight years. The many long-term employees are a part of the family, too.

"I've got managers that have been with me 15, 16 years. I've got technicians that have been with me 20. I've got one technician that's been with me 27 years!" Doug exclaims.

*Continued on page 4*

### Sam's Corner

## ATI's First Women's 20-Group

We are proud to announce the formation of a special 20-Group for women shop owners. Judi Haglin approached me at this year's SuperConference with this great idea, and client fulfillment implemented the concept in eight weeks. The amazing part is, it filled up almost to capacity in several weeks. If you would like to apply to be a part of this group, there were two seats available at the time of writing this article. This makes the thirteenth 20-Group created for ATI Alumni, on the way to Bryan Stasch's goal of twenty groups.

My vision for the Women's 20-Group was based on several factors. First, I believe women bring a different perspective to solving problems in an auto repair shop. The woman traditionally handles the accounting and bookkeeping for the shop. They understand the metrics and what the shop's expenses are, usually better than anyone

else. Second, seeing the shop through the eyes of a woman helps create an environment friendly to other women, who are now the majority of our customers. I remember years ago when we were teaching how to create a woman-friendly environment. Most of our men clients didn't get it until the woman in the shop put her foot down and made it happen. It is my hope we will all learn new skills from the Women's 20-Groups, skills that we can implement and share throughout our entire client base.

The group will be facilitated by Coach Kim Hickey. Kim was a shop owner and spent 30 months in our Re-Engineering and Alumni programs before becoming a full-time coach. If you would like to apply to be a part of this group, you can email Kim at [Khickey@autotraining.net](mailto:Khickey@autotraining.net).

The group was surveyed to see what they wanted to cover, and the highest votes were for community outreach, interviewing and hiring, disaster preparation, and how to get more involved in the business. Kim wants to have a group discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of being a female in the automotive industry, and about whether members favor promoting their business as "Woman Owned."

The group will have two-day sessions twice a year at our new facility at BWI airport. The group will be choosing a leader and a logo, but they have already chosen a name: The Leading Ladies.

So ladies, if this is something you feel you would enjoy, please contact Kim before the group fills up!

# When “I Want To” Isn’t Enough

By George Zeeks



One of my first trials, and failures, of manhood took place in the early spring of my fourteenth year. It was time to go fishing. It was first trip of the year, and I had pestered my dad until he finally gave in. You see, since I was a man now, I felt that I should be in charge of the preparations for the trip. We didn’t get that much time together, and I wanted to prove myself. Leaving early in the morning, we arrived just before sunrise. That was the official time when you could put your boat in the water, and I wanted us to be first. The battery for the electric motor was fully charged, the poles were in the boat, the live well was prepped and all was good in the world – almost. Once we were on the lake, it soon became obvious that I had forgotten to bring the tackle box and all that we needed to actually fish. I still had a lure on my rod that I had used almost seven months ago but ... My dad had a great time with this one and looking back, I don’t blame him at all. He reached under his seat and pulled out the tackle box. He changed his lure to a nice brightly colored spinner, to fit the low light. I, on the other hand, was left to use what I had brought. He caught fish and I caught nothing! I still believe that many of us

learn from pain and disappointment, but some never learn. The need to be prepared never left me and has helped me coach shop owners on the need to be prepared.

The summer is a great time to fish and a great time for most shops. When things are going great, you can forget to prepare for the coming slowdown. Making money now blinds us to the need to have the right bait for Back to School and the need to make preparations in advance. The time to prepare for the beginning of fall is now! I know you’re busy, I get it. Who cares! You have a responsibility to your staff and their families to make sure you have a constant flow of cars into your shop. One type of bait may not be enough, so you have to have a marketing campaign ready to go and preordered. The time to start your marketing is not when the car count is drying up; that’s way too late. If you consider that you’re going to need 30 to 90 days to get all the necessary supplies and complete your rough and final drafts on the marketing pieces, you may already be behind when you read this.

If you had a great Back to School last year and your marketing is on track, then good for you. If you had a disappointing fall last year, then you better get on the ball. A great way to get started is to get with your coach and go through your marketing calendar to make sure you have

ALL of the pieces in place that you’re going to need. A big note, by the way: If what you did last year didn’t work, then you better come up with something different this year. I know you want to have a good year, but what are you doing to make sure it happens? Let’s get creative and come up with three, four, maybe even five different marketing events to ensure that you have enough cars for your people and for you. The last thing you want to do is keep fishing with the same old thing that no one is biting on. Trust me, I know, I’ve been there.



## Members Talk About the New Group

“I am excited and honored to be among a group of such intelligent and strong businesswomen. I can’t wait for the group to come together and really make a difference on a national level!”

— Megan Hines

“I feel this group will help me be a more productive partner to my husband in the business. Also, I feel the networking possibilities are going to be amazing. We have a great group of strong women who will help us get things accomplished at our shops and help each other.”

— Diane Steinbach

“Women who either own their own repair shop, work in someone else’s repair shop or strongly support a spouse, significant other or immediate family member in a repair shop have united to form ATT’s very first ALL women

20-Group. Even though these ladies have diverse backgrounds, their association with the automobile repair industry serves as a common thread, which is why they have emerged as leaders in their family, shop and community. Hence, The Leading Ladies have evolved and vow to help and support each other with their needs in order to do bigger and better things.”

— Karen Donald

“I was not excited to attend the women’s 20-Group. My husband thought it would be good if I attended. So I reluctantly did and thought I had nothing to offer this group. Well, now I have to tell him he was right. It is awesome to be part of the Chubby’s Angels Leading Ladies group. I totally enjoyed being in the room with real women, where we could share and build relationships with other owners who

are going through the same things. I also really enjoyed having dinner and relaxing with our group. I am honored and blessed to be part of something big.”

— Patty Carroll



# Your Available Training Programs for July and August 2012

## July 2012

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday/Sunday

|  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  | 1   |
| 2  | 3   | 4<br>Independence Day   | 5   | 6   | 7/8   |
| 9<br><b>Service Advisor</b><br>1 of 4  | 10<br><b>Service Advisor</b><br>2 of 4  | 11<br><b>Shop Owner</b><br>1 of 9   | 12<br><b>Shop Owner</b><br>2 of 9   | 13<br><b>Shop Owner</b><br>3 of 9   | 14/15   |
| 16<br><b>SA</b><br>20 Group Regulators   | 17<br><b>SA</b><br>20 Group Regulators  | 18<br><b>Shop Owner</b><br>4 of 9   | 19<br><b>Shop Owner</b><br>5 of 9   | 20<br><b>Shop Owner</b><br>6 of 9   | 21/22   |
| 23   | 24  | 25<br><b>Shop Owner</b><br>7 of 9   | 26<br><b>Shop Owner</b><br>8 of 9   | 27<br><b>Shop Owner</b><br>9 of 9   | 28/29   |
| 30<br><b>Service Advisor</b><br>3 of 4   | 31<br><b>Service Advisor</b><br>4 of 4  |  |  |  |  |

## August 2012

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday/Sunday

|   |  |                                   |                                   |                                   |   |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
|  |  | 1                                 | 2                                 | 3                                 | 4/5   |
| 6<br><b>Service Advisor</b><br>1 of 4   | 7<br><b>Service Advisor</b><br>2 of 4  | 8<br><b>Shop Owner</b><br>1 of 9  | 9<br><b>Shop Owner</b><br>2 of 9  | 10<br><b>Shop Owner</b><br>3 of 9 | 11/12   |
| 13<br><b>Service Advisor</b><br>20 Group 3  | 14<br><b>Service Advisor</b><br>20 Group 3   | 15<br><b>Shop Owner</b><br>4 of 9 | 16<br><b>Shop Owner</b><br>5 of 9 | 17<br><b>Shop Owner</b><br>6 of 9 | 18/19   |
| 20  | 21   | 22<br><b>Shop Owner</b><br>7 of 9 | 23<br><b>Shop Owner</b><br>8 of 9 | 24<br><b>Shop Owner</b><br>9 of 9 | 25/26   |
| 27<br><b>Service Advisor</b><br>3 of 4  | 28<br><b>Service Advisor</b><br>4 of 4   | 29                                | 30                                | 31                                |  |

Continued from page 2

While Doug describes himself as a “workaholic,” he still manages to get away for some fun and community service.

“I still put in 60 hours a week. I do a lot at night. I’ll go home and work on the business, planning and making sure all the books are balanced and so forth. But I also volunteer on the safety patrol at the Whitetail Ski Resort in Pennsylvania.”

Doug says they continue to deal with people problems, externally and internally, as well as the issues that typically arise in a family business, but the way ATI has helped them to structure their business is giving their children a chance to grow and “do their own thing” within the company.

“We are trying to keep the end in mind for our sons so they have the ability to say, ‘O.K., this is what I can achieve now,’” Doug explains. “That’s important to me, just letting them be able to grow.”

As he continues to build the business, Doug says it’s important to trust your people.

“Look for the good and the bad in people,” he advises. “Work on the good, understand the bad and make sure you’re getting the right training for your people, whether it’s financial training, whether it’s sales training, whether it’s leadership training. You’ve got to use the best that you have and keep searching for the best people.” 

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