

UNIVERSITY OF TAMPA COMMENCEMENT SPEECH
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Thank you, President Vaughn and the University of Tampa for the honor of speaking at this Commencement Ceremony.

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES! "YOU MADE IT!"
CONGRATULATIONS PARENTS! "YOUR BANK ACCOUNTS SURVIVED IT!"

Much thanks to this fine faculty for doing all possible to help prepare these students for the future.

I thought I would break-up my brief talk into two categories loosely defined as "Success Enhancers" and unfortunately "Success Killers" followed by my observation of great leader characteristics. Let's start with...

Success Enhancers and Success Killers

Success Enhancer #1: From my perspective – Hard Work

Nothing will substitute in the long run for Hard Work, Dedication and Persistence. The bestselling author Harvey Mackay is credited with one of my favorite quotes: "*If you decide only to perform to the minimum standards make sure you have good union protection behind you or your Dad owns the company.*"

Raymond James Motto: WORK-WORK-PLAY

You'll notice 2 "Works" and 1 "Play". This motto is something deeply embedded into the Raymond James culture and reinforces the absolute necessity of hard work as well as "balance" which is the "play" element.

Success Killer #1: Negative Attitude

No one likes a grump except another grump. Have fun at what you do and it will reflect in your work. True leaders are expected to maintain a positive attitude in the face of adversity and challenges.

Success Enhancer #2: Learn From Your Mistakes

Mistakes are inevitable and unavoidable. Do not try to lay off errors on co-workers – your boss will read right through that. Quite simply accept responsibility. Make the point of honest self-assessment of your capabilities and work on improving your weaker skill sets.

Success Killer #2: Resistance To Change

The world is constantly changing. If you don't adapt to change as an individual, corporation or educational organization You Will Fail.

Success Enhancer #3: Proper Balance Between I.Q. and E.Q.

How many people do you know that are very bright, maybe even gifted that struggle with the many "social" aspects of life? Likewise, how many people do you know that fancy themselves as geniuses – But Aren't – and cover up weaknesses with odd or unusual social behavior?

I have interviewed and hired hundreds over my 33+ years at Raymond James and I will always make hiring decisions looking for bright individuals with high social skills and most importantly a get it done attitude.

Success Killer #3: Lack of Decision Making and Over-Analysis

Keep in mind that no decision is a decision. Some individuals hide behind continued “analysis” of a problem quite simply to delay making a decision. This route seems “safer” to many individuals in the short run but is deadly to an organization in the long run. If you ask enough people for permission, you will eventually get a “no”. Successful people take appropriate, well thought out risks and are quick to make a decision.

Characteristics of Successful Leaders

1. Good leaders sometimes make people unhappy as tough decisions are just that – tough decisions. I tell our staff that the more responsibility you have in an organization is directly proportional to how many times you are obligated to say “No”. You will lose the respect of your team if you don’t deal with difficult people or situations.
2. Good leaders are accessible and available. The day your staff stops bringing you their problems, is the day you stop leading. Good leaders are visible. “A desk is a dangerous place from which to view the world.”
3. Good leaders do not have “Yes-Men or Yes-Women” working for them. If you have yes-men or yes-women working for you, one of you is redundant. Think about the implications of this statement on your career.
4. Good Leaders have fun in leadership. You can’t always run at a breakneck pace. I have little time for the woe is me grim workaholic or the pompous professional. I will help them find jobs with our competitors.
5. Good Leaders delegate and empower liberally, but pay close attention to detail. They give credit where credit is due.
6. Good Leaders cut through all of the “Noise” of 40-page PowerPoint presentations and get to the most important factors quickly. When those important factors are identified, a mandate to make quick decisive decision is necessary.

Closing

A now famous and somewhat controversial message was published in the Wall Street Journal by United Technologies entitled “*Let’s Get Rid of Management*”.

People don’t want to be managed. They want to be led. Whoever heard of a World Manager?

A World Leader – Yes!

Educational Leader

Religious Leader

Scout Leader

Labor Leader

Business Leader

They lead. They don’t manage.

The carrot always wins over the stick...Ask your horse.

You can lead your horse to water but can’t make him drink.

If you want to manage someone, manage yourself.

Do that and you’ll be ready to stop managing and start leading!

Thank you for the opportunity to be part of your Commencement. ENJOY YOUR DAY!