

Don't Confuse the Tool with the Craftsman



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From time to time a professional will ask a question like “do you have scripts that are proven to work” or “does your system guarantee results” or I’ll hear a person make a statement like “well I tried so and so system and it didn’t work.” That little piece of sarcasm wants to come out and say “if I handed you Tiger Woods driver, do you think you could drive like him?” Loan officers today are inundated with marketing and training support coming from every angle possible. My inbox sometimes feels like the Home Shopping Network television channel with all of the speakers, trainers, celebrity originators, wanting people to buy “their system.”

In the average week I receive over 40 emails from trainers, speakers, lead companies, etc. all wanting to sell their stuff. Heck, I’m one of them, I was one of the first to use email as a tool to promote my seminars and services. Between all of the service providers a loan originator can attend as many as four to eight teleconference seminars in a week. Everyone is using the same platform to promote their service and products and to distribute information to their client base.

I feel from this marketing barrage, many are mislead to believe “if I use their system, software, scripts or tools like spreadsheets or Power Point slides, I can be just like them and experience the same success.” Most of that type of marketing is targeted towards the gullible that think success can be copied, give me the script, the letter’s and I too can be successful. Success is not duplicate able, it must be created. You can borrow a piece here or a piece there but in the end it must be your own creation. Why is it that the STRONG majority of the “top producers” or celebrity originators do not duplicate their success through horizontal, vertical or branch expansion? Because their businesses are not scalable. Many of those business models are too “personality dependent.”

As I read the offers, as a consultant, the thought that pops into my mind is “I hope the user is a craftsman and has the skill set needed to use that tool.” As you are reading this, I have used the word “tool” and I do not want anyone to think this is a slam against Loan Tool Box. If not anything else, I believe the Loan Tool Box has done one of the best jobs in the industry in not only providing the tools, but they have also dedicated a large section of their web site towards the personal development side of the business improving the skill set of the craftsman.

I highly endorse and recommend Loan Tool Box to all of my clients. All the software, tools, scripts and so on in the world, the absolute best quality tools will do no one any good without the commitment to develop their craft, their skill set, their salesmanship skill set. A person needs to develop that “win or die trying” attitude. One of my clients has made the statement “don’t confuse the tool with the craftsman.”

My father was a carpenter and he was a really good one at that. I could give him a \$6 hammer and that guy could still drive a nail straight into the wood and without a bunch of divot marks that I would normally leave behind. Now I am one of those guys that has to buy the best. If I had a project to do and it required my using a hammer, I would probably buy the \$40 top of the line, leather grip, holster, cover, the packaged hammer. If I had to be in a contest with my dad and he had to use

the K-Mart, blue light special, \$6 hammer and we had 3 minutes to see who could drive more nails into a chunk of lumber, I guarantee you, he would whip my backside everyday of the week.

So what makes Tiger a great golfer and my dad a great carpenter? Commitment towards ones profession, desire to be the best, not settling for second place, a commitment to win, the desire to practice and get better even when no one is forcing you to, all of that character stuff most people don't want to work on. So many in our business, are looking for a short cut or the easy way to make a buck without going through the pain in change.

In my coaching and assisting those in business and through the development of FinanceThisHome.com, I have seen people have tremendous successes and miserable failures all using the same tool and receiving the same guidance. One of my past clients and territory managers from FinanceThisHome.com I recently had a phone discussion with me after another key person on his team quit. Please notice I said "after another." He has had several LO's, FSBO directors, Realtor Account executives and DEW's (Database Email Web directors) come and go in a short period of time. He has a real challenge with leadership, management, accountability and responsibility in my opinion. Even worse than all of that, he completely fails to take responsibility for the outcome. I'm sure he'll take the credit for the victories and wins, but when it comes to the failures or short comings, he's quick to blame others.

One person considering FinanceThisHome.com called him to ask his opinion of the system and he stated "we have been working the system now for two years and have had little success with FSBO's." He forgot to mention that since the market has changed he has had little to no success with anything! When he was considering abandoning his FTH territory I asked him a few very direct questions. "How many signs do you have up?" His reply, "about 30." I said "great!" I then asked "how many home seller's, selling their home to buy another do you have with loan application waiting for their home to sell to provide loan services for them?" Go ahead, guess his answer, you got it, "ZERO!" Next question "how many of your sellers or what percentage of your sellers are holding open house and collecting names for you each weekend?" "ZERO!" Next question: "How many home sellers are advertising with you each week?" "ZERO!" "How many linking partners do you have?" Go ahead, guess. "ZERO!"

In place of taking personal responsibility for the results or outcome, he elected to place the blame on me. At the same time of my discussion with him I hold conference calls with several people each week telling me success stories with the same tools and the same coaching. Immediately after the previously mentioned phone call, I called one a territory manager, one with a winning attitude and we had a 20 minute "how's it going" discussion. At the end of the call he said "hey Ron, thanks for taking the time to call me." All I could say was "no, thank you!" He had no clue I needed him more than he wanted to speak to me to give me a little reinforcement and a shot of enthusiasm to get rid of the funk from the previous call.

I have had this conversation twice in the past three months with a territory manager that is thinking about resigning his territory and is about to quit. Both times the person on the other end of the phone was expecting me to attempt to talk them

out of it. They thought I was going to grovel and beg them to keep it. Both times I made statements like “if you think I am going to beg and grovel in an effort to keep you in the system, you are fooling yourself. Give it back and I will get it in the hands of someone committed to making it work”

During the call he made a statement like “anyone who cannot see ‘it’ or does not get ‘it’ or is not taking the time to develop ‘it’ (I think he hit the nail on the head with the last comment) is an idiot!” I can use another great analogy here to drive home my point. I’m from San Diego and although the Chargers are not committed to excellence nor winning, I am a fan through association with having grown up there. It’s painful, please do not email me regarding this confession.

A few years back, there was a very important draft in the National Football League. Payton Manning and Ryan Leaf were head to head for the top pick in the draft. Who would be number one or number two? Would the Chargers pick Manning and leave Leaf to the Colts or visa versa? It was a really big deal. Now on paper and through statistical data, Ryan Leaf was the better choice. He was bigger, stronger, threw the ball harder, all the right stuff on paper. If you listened to the so called “experts” on ESPN or other sports related broadcast, they all statically thought Ryan Leaf was better. However a few really sharp people in those environments started to look at the intangibles that do not show up on the statistic charts. They started to speak of issues such as leadership, commitment, willing to work hard, work ethic, discipline, etc. When you looked at those items, Payton Manning was clearly the better choice.

Well the Chargers being the Chargers chose what we now refer to as “Cry’ in Leaf.” Look back at history and the examples are there. Manning has gone on to many winning seasons, to make millions of dollars, to this day has a HUGE demand as a quarterback should the Colts release him. Cry ‘in Leaf, discarded, thrown to the bone yard, no one is interested, not retired, simply not sought after. He had no work ethic, no discipline, no commitment, in my opinion, NOTHING over all. He would show up to practices late, be involved in arguments with his team mates, leave practice when it was over, he would be seen in the San Diego night club and late night restaurant scene, on and on. He was a train wreck in every meaning of the word. Bad attitude, failure to take responsibility, failure to be determined to make it work, failure as an event turned into a person.

Payton Manning on the other hand stayed late after practice to watch video footage of the competition. He would watch video tape of himself and be an honest critic, looking for opportunities for improvement. He knew his statistics, his strengths and weaknesses and set goals to improve upon them. He took responsibility for his teams wins and loses. He doesn’t run over to the sideline and yell at his coach, he looks within and asks himself “how could I have played better?”

My mentor is Tom Hopkins. He has a saying I live by. “Failure is an event it’s not a person unless they chose it to be.” That is one powerful statement. I fail all the time, I just usually do it in private. Once I figure “it” out I then share “it” with others. If your not failing, your not trying. The absolute best training I every received in my career and LIFE came from Tom Hopkins. Tom teaches his students his “Attitudes Towards Failure.” Before you graduate Boot Camp, along with sixty something companions, you must commit to memory the Attitudes Towards Failure, they

In this model, you begin at the top. Lay out all your choices to accomplish the task. I'll use FSBO marketing as an example here.

1. There are 19 different marketing strategies for a FSBO system. In the first circle you lay them out.

2. Because of limited resources, you select the best three or four ideas.

3. Next you prioritize your options.

4. Next you select the absolute best option and prepare to launch. Sidebar, 1 through 4 make you no money.

5. Implement

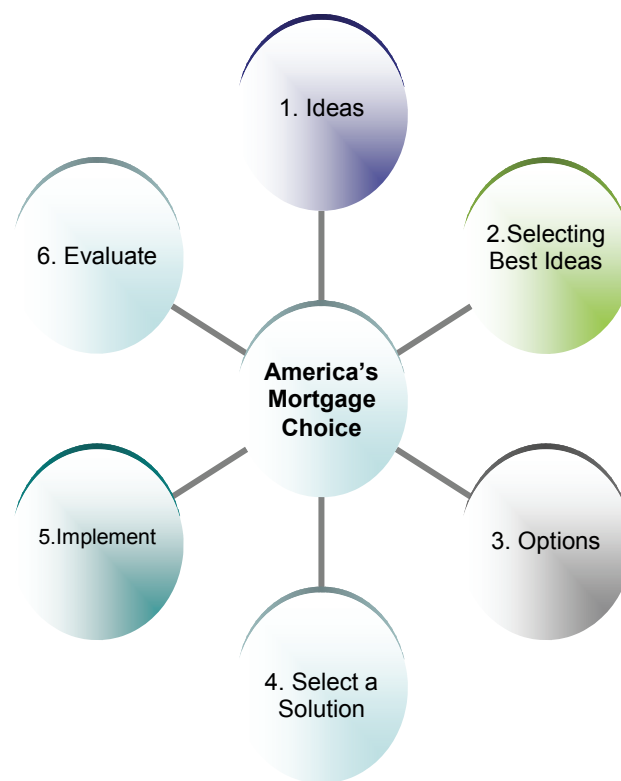
6. Evaluate and measure and from my clients that are students of Six Sigma management, measuring is the key. If it isn't broke, LOOK CLOSER!

Next repeat the cycle, continue the clockwise rotation with new information and make adjustments to the system. Not only are you making adjustments for improving the first idea and always learning, the second time through the circle you add the next idea and self-perpetuating motion starts to take over.

Continue this circular process until you build momentum and your systems begin to accelerate going faster and faster.

are...

- I NEVER see failure as failure, but only as a LEARNING EXPERIENCE.
 - I NEVER see failure as failure, but only as THE NEGATIVE FEEDBACK I NEED TO CHANGE COURSE IN MY DIRECTION.
 - I NEVER see failure as failure, but only as the OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP MY SENSE OF HUMOR.
 - I NEVER see failure as failure, but only as AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTICE MY TECHNIQUE AND PERFECT MY PERFORMANCE.
- I NEVER see failure as failure, but only as THE GAME I MUST PLAY TO WIN!



I want to take a moment to break each one of those down.

I NEVER see failure as failure, but only as a LEARNING EXPERIENCE

In coaching, I cannot tell you how much time I have seen wasted in on-going planning. Don't get me wrong, planning is important but you need to take your ideas and test them to see where you need to make an adjustment or two or three. You learn from failure, it's when you give up your in trouble. Now you're a quitter and you have begun the development

of a new character trait, one that is worse than smoking, drinking and over eating combined, QUITTING.

Next is

I NEVER see failure as failure, but only as THE NEGATIVE FEEDBACK I NEED TO CHANGE COURSE IN MY DIRECTION.

From my training from Career Track and Fred Pryor Seminars, I was taught the "Winning Business Cycle."

It's the feedback from the systems that are making us better. I recently had lunch with two territory managers and one of them made the statement "I now know how to put up signs, it's the caller conversation I'm having a challenge with. We discussed his learning process of putting signs up. He tried mailing, he tried the drop off package approach, he finally tried my favorite approach (he had to build up his confidence first to learn the system) show up at the sellers open house or on weekends go knock on their door. I reminded him that he was not always that confident in making statements like "I can put up a sign, that's not a problem" and that he would have to go through the same learning curve for call conversation.

Failure is the negative feedback we need to change course in our direction. I said to him "tell me what your saying?" He was using really bad typical lender vocabulary like "Pre-Qualify" or "get you pre-approved." The analogy I used to teach him this lesson was boxing. I shared with him he was now in training camp getting ready for the big fight. In that fight, we don't know if our opponent (the consumer) is a south paw (left handed) or right handed. We don't know if they use a jab, uppercut or an over the top punching style. We just better be prepared to handle what ever they throw at us. I asked him "if I was the consumer, tell me a really compelling reason why I should work with you versus the 3,000 other loan people in my market?"

Because he has been to all of the conference calls he used all the right catch phrases. "Trusted Advisor, Mortgage Planner, our advice Makes a Difference, Clients for Life" blah, blah, blah. Then he went into the basics like "honesty, integrity, hard worker" etc. As though I would expect him to say "I'm a liar, I'm out for myself and I'm looking to use a shortcut to get to my commission sooner and I only work three hours a day." I shared with him some adjustments to make and attempt a different tactic and he will find the right combination to knock his opponent out.

The next Attitude is...

I NEVER see failure as failure, but only as the OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP MY SENSE OF HUMOR.

And as Tom Hopkins says "if you can find a way to laugh at your problems, in this business, you can be in stitches most of the time." As Brad Burnell says it "figure out a way to have fun with it and you'll be better at it." Learn, laugh, have fun. When you try a technique and you fall flat on your face, have fun with it, chuckle and say with an attitude "Well THAT didn't work" but never give up. Another mentor of mine from my Century 21 days, David Kellerman, has a saying he is always repeating, "If it's possible in the world, then it's possible for me, it's only a matter of HOW!"

The next attitude is...

I NEVER see failure as failure, but only as AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTICE MY TECHNIQUE AND PERFECT MY PERFORMANCE

Maybe you remember the story of the two lumberjacks. One was a young, tall, strongman, the largest man in the village. If you ever saw the animated movie Beauty and the Beast, one of the main characters was named Gaston. That's the vision I want you to have in your mind, I'll just name that character Gaston for the purpose of this story. Now the other guy was in his sixties. He was one of the elders, the guy with the experience, smaller in stature, due to age slower and just not "the zip" of energy he once had, let's call him George. Well Gaston heard of the controversy and decided to challenge George once and for all establishing who the best was. George accepted.

On the day of the challenge the two men came prepared. The test would be one of strength, speed and longevity. Who chop down more trees in tree hours, ready, GO! Well both men started to chop down trees. About an hour into it George stopped chopping, grabbed his axe and walked into the woods by himself. Gaston saw this and got excited thinking the old man has pooped out, he needs a break. About 10 minutes later George was back on the scene chopping away. About an hour later George does it again. He stops, grabs his axe, walks into the woods comes back 10 minutes later and resumes chopping. Gaston never stops, he just keeps chopping away.

Finally time was up. The towns people came to count and declare who was the winner. To everyone's amazement, George had won. Gaston was beside himself, he could not figure out how he lost. In congratulating George Gaston said to George "I don't get it, I never stopped, you stopped twice, how could you have won?" George said to Gaston, "you must learn to take time to sharpen your axe. I was told that story over 20 years ago and later Stephen Covey in his work the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People referred to this as "sharpening your saw." We must always look for a way to improve our performance.

The last and most empowering attitude is...

I NEVER see failure as failure, but only as THE GAME I MUST PLAY TO WIN!

I see selling as a sport. I love competition. I grew up playing just about every West Coast team sport you can think of, football, baseball, basketball, if their was a ball involved, I was ready to compete. No pucks for this kid. I decided to put this late attitude on steroids and add to the end of it "AND I WILL WIN!"

Just like in sports everyone wants the perfect season, to not lose any games. A very rare occurrence. During the games there are setbacks along the way. Sometimes the other team is ahead, sometimes you sustain an injury along the way. You can't quit and you have to play hurt. Sometimes that hurt or pain is physical, emotional, psychological, whatever the pain is, you have to play hurt. Quitting is NEVER an option.

I have used a saying many times with my children, clients, friends and on myself that is only two simple words yet very powerful. They are FAIL FORWARD. Everyone is going to experience the "F" words, failure, fatigue, frustration, fear. It's how we respond and then take action when those occurrences happen.