

Copying Genius

By T Scott Gross

Walter Hailey says it best when he wonders why so many of us insist on re-inventing mediocrity when we could just as well be copying genius. Hang out with Hailey for more than five minutes and you're bound to hear him say that while the intelligent know everything, the wealthy know everyone.

Hailey has made a lifetime practice of looking for short-cuts. Easier ways to learn, easier ways to sell, easier ways to achieve. And isn't it funny that the very thing that your mother warned you not to do, taking the easy way out, has allowed Hailey to laugh all the way to the bank?

Hailey advises anyone who will listen that the key to success is a form of networking that I call *networthing*. Simply described, it is nothing more than actively seeking to learn as much as you can from those who have information that could be key to your success.

People hold on to their wallets when they are asked for cash but when an enterprising and half-way pleasant person asks for knowledge of almost limitless value, those same folks are ready, willing and able to cough up buckets of advice and introductions.

Networthing is not about social panhandling. It is not a matter of obtaining privilege without contribution. It is about building relationships that, properly nurtured, result in an increase networth whether you

measure in terms of dollars of data.

Data begets dollars.

So, let's look at building your intellectual network on the theory that the more you know, the more you will ultimately earn.

Building an intellectual network can be accomplished several ways. You can take the traditional, arrogant route of the know-it-all and build your business from scratch. Write your own policies. Create your own sales and marketing strategies. Invent yourself from whole cloth.

Or you can use the technique of networthing. Study, then copy genius. Look to see who is the leader in your field. Study them carefully and copy the best of their ideas. It's okay to add original thought but it's stupid not to take advantage of the wealth of experience that has moved the business to its current state. Start from now instead of yesterday.

You won't have to hide in the bushes to get your information. Walk right up and ask. Then stand by to be surprised at the wealth of information that will be volunteered. Millions of dollars and heartaches of hard-earned advice will be yours for the asking.

And don't forget to ask for introductions to others who can help.

The brightest students are quick to find a mentor, someone who has blazed the trail and is willing to share. Mentors are surprisingly easy to come by for those who

come across as serious students. If you are not serious, mentors have a way of disappearing.

And don't limit yourself to a single mentor. No one knows everything. Create instead a circle of mentors and make it a habit to meet with them frequently. One source of mentors is as close as your local library.

(One characteristic of the terminally successful is that they always seem to be reading. Interpret that, if you will, as "they are always seeking knowledge and advice from their mentors in print.")

Think for a moment about the advantage that you could gain by reading a good book every week. If your competitor never bothers to read and learn while you are reading a book each week, it won't be long before you have at your command a wealth of knowledge and experience that can't help but turn into a significant competitive advantage.

In the end, your net worth will be a direct reflection on your networthing ability.

What genius are you trying to copy or what mediocre idea have you decided to re-invent? Who sits as your counsel? A wise friend and mentor or yourself?

Attorneys have a saying that those who act as their own attorneys have a fool for a client. The same could be said of those who insist on doing things their way. Too many have already gone before you. Why not step, at least some of the time, in

their footprints? It makes the journey easier and you'll see so much more of the world.

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