

Mind ur Business

Joe Hart: “Build Trust, Build Relationships”

By Yitzchok Saftlas



Every Sunday evening since July 2015, Yitzchok Saftlas, CEO of Bottom Line Marketing Group, hosts 77WABC’s “Mind Your Business” show on America’s leading talk radio station. The show features Fortune 500 CEOs, CMOs, and top business leaders, where they share their business knowledge and strategic insights on how to get ahead in today’s corporate world. Since Q2 2017, the 77WABC “Mind Your Business” show has remained in the coveted Nielsen “Top 10” in New York’s highly competitive AM Talk Radio market. Guests have included John Sculley, former CEO of Apple and Pepsi; Dick Schulze, founder and Chairman Emeritus of Best Buy; Beth Comstock, former Vice Chair of GE; and Captain Sully Sullenberger, among nearly 200 senior-level executives and business celebrities.

Every other week, TJH will feature leading questions and takeaways from Yitzchok’s popular radio show.

On a recent 77WABC “Mind Your Business” broadcast, Yitzchok sat down to speak with Joe Hart about the secrets behind his remarkable success. Joe is a major influence when it comes to building one of the most iconic brands in the business and education industry. Joe is the president and CEO of the world-renowned Dale Carnegie Training. Dale Carnegie is famous for building and shaping young entrepreneurs, as well as large corporations and organizations. Whether improvement in professional development, leadership training, customer service, employee engagement, or any other essential management skill, its training solutions are available in over 90 countries, in 29 languages, and have served millions of people worldwide. Dale Carnegie services 400 of the Fortune 500 companies, and Joe Hart is the man who stands behind it all.

YS: Joe, let’s talk about your success with Dale Carnegie. Millennials dream that by age 22 they’ll be the CEO of a Fortune 500 Company. You’re the CEO

of Dale Carnegie. What was the journey like?

JH: It’s pretty incredible for me even to think about. You know, I started out as a young man. My father introduced me to the book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Dale Carnegie’s bestseller book. As a teen, I thought it was a phenomenal book, and it really had a huge impact on me. I went to college, then to law school, became a lawyer, and, as a young lawyer, I decided I wanted to take a Dale Carnegie course. This is back in 1995, and the industry really was committed to career and personal growth. That course had a tremendous life-changing impact on me. It changed my vision for myself. As much as I was, I think, a good lawyer, I wasn’t necessarily a happy lawyer, and it really challenged me and ultimately, I left the practice of law. I started a business that was an e-learning company in 2000. Actually, Dale Carnegie was my first client. The whole concept of that company started with the idea that in Dale Carnegie you take a class or a program that’s really awesome but then the question is, what do I apply afterward? How much

am I really realizing? So, I developed a system to really help apply the Dale Carnegie principles and turned it into a business, and Dale Carnegie became a client. We built that e-learning company with other great clients, Roy Hill and others, and I sold it in 2005. Then I had an opportunity to start another company, a national health promotion company, that was based on the technology we developed in that first program. I was recruited in 2000 to become the CEO of Dale Carnegie and went through a very rigorous process. I moved my wife and six kids from Michigan to Long Island and probably would not have done that for any other company other than Dale Carnegie.

YS: You touched on something that is such a crucial point for anyone in business and that is goal setting. We all have goals, we all have vision, we all have ambition. But what’s your recommendation to someone who has failed to put it down to get them to really start hitting their targets?

JH: The question of vision is such

an important one. A lot of us know what we want to do or have a vague idea about it but haven’t really taken the time to sit down and write it down. Some of it is less about complexity and more about discipline – actually, having the discipline to write down and say, “This is my vision, this is what I stand for” and then to ask what is my plan to make that happen, to have those goals. So often people will have goals, like New Year’s resolutions, and then next year it’s like, what happened? This is one of the major parts of a Dale Carnegie course. We work with people to define their vision, and, if it’s in six months from now, put it in terms that are not “I will be,” but “I am.” Because there’s an emotional component in it, that’s what we mean when we talk about behavioral change. Sometimes people just think about why I need to do this or how do I do this. But is there really any emotional commitment? We really believe that emotional change and behavioral change are what lead to performance change. So if people have that vision and take the time to write it down they need to have the consistency to go back and look at it. They

need to have that strong “why.” What am I committed to? Even if it’s only one thing you need to be committed to – be committed to it and go for it.

YS: How important is it to have it written down on paper?

JH: I’d say it’s critical. We’ve heard examples of people who will write themselves a check and put it in their wallet or whatnot. But in my own experience, if I have a goal but I don’t write it down, then I’m pulled in too many directions every single day. There are distractions – distractions of the phone, e-mail, social media, family, work, and all kinds of things. I would advise people to keep it simple and short. It doesn’t have to be 10 things. It doesn’t have to have 20 sub-parts. Just, what is that clear goal? What are you really committed to achieve and achieve that? And once you achieve that, do the next one.

YS: You speak around the world and one of the concepts you speak about is the “global leadership crisis.” Perhaps you could share your vision on that.

JH: I think the first time I talked about it was in 2015 in Brazil. Brazil’s a country that has had significant turmoil, as our country has and many have, around political leadership, social business leadership and so forth. And really what we’re talking about is a breakdown of trust. People expect our leaders to perform in a certain way and often they don’t. Often, it’s for personal gain. So part of what we teach in Dale Carnegie is that the foundation of everything in life and success starts with a relationship and having strong relationships requires trust. So in what ways can I build trust? How do I build trust with people? Some of this is common sense, like keeping your promises. But part of it also just goes with who I am, who am I being? And then, what am I doing? Am I being empathetic? Am I showing appreciation for you? Am I listening to you? Am I respecting you? So often, we are so focused on ourselves and what we’re doing that if a relationship is crucial, we should really be focusing on how am I building a better relationship with the people I work with, with the people in my family, with the people in my community and so forth.

The Dale Carnegie principles are things that people can do to build better relationships and build trust.

YS: How can a leader build trust and respect from their team?

JH: That’s a big question because it’s multifaceted. It’s not necessarily one thing. We talk about who am I being? Am I a leader who is authentic? Am I a leader who is empathetic? Am I a leader who really communicates? And one of the things we talk about at Dale Carnegie is that people support the world they help create. Am I talking to my people? Am I listening to my people? Am I asking them what they think? Or am I simply directing and saying this is what you’re going to do? There’s a time and place for different types of leadership styles. And at the same time, a leader who works to build relationships with people and who listens and appreciates them is going to be much more successful at building trust.

YS: I want to move to corporate storytelling. We know that storytelling has been around since the beginning of time. Perhaps you could discuss it and relate how critical it is for a company to craft their unique corporate story.

JH: When we talk about corporate storytelling, we are referring to connection. How do I connect with people and build consensus? Dale Carnegie talks about how to win friends and influence people. And one thing that unifies people across geographies, races, religions or whatnot is who we are as people and this nature of storytelling. People will stop if I said to them, “I want to tell you a story.” In a corporate environment the same thing is true. We still can communicate in a powerful way if we can communicate a story or a message, whether it’s through an example or an analogy or whatever it might be. In a business environment, how do I communicate? How do I tell an effective story? How do I make it not too long, not too short, not too much detail, and so forth. Part of what we talk about is that there are stories that are my personal stories that I can tell and are excited about and can be powerful. And there might be stories also that I can tell that will make a point and help you see my perspective and so forth.

YS: Are there any other tips on that? You touched on something very powerful: that a CEO may have the right to tell his own story, which may have value, and sometimes it’s a corporate story or a parable. Perhaps you could still elaborate on this because it’s such an important topic.

JH: As a CEO myself, whether I’m speaking to my own team or to teams around the world or to someone who might come to an event where I’m speaking, it’s about how do I engage an audience? How do I give something of value? I’m thinking to myself about that audience. And if it’s a corporate message, being able to tell a story that helps people see, as I understand, that’s really what this is about. But the best CEOs, the most effective ones, interact with people and can engage people and often they’re really good at telling the stories.

YS: I’m going to go to another question that came from the audience, and this is from David from Boca Raton. How do I handle a fellow staff member when your responsibilities put you in a superior position of another person who is your senior?

JH: It’s a tricky situation and tough situation, for sure. One of the things that that we teach is a first principle: try honestly to see things from the other person’s point of view. Recognizing that we’re working together, so how are you seeing this? How are you seeing me? How do I handle that situation? I try to have some level of understanding. Clearly, I’ve got a job to do. You’ve got to know that we’ve got to work together and get the results we have to get. But I’m going to have a sensitivity to the fact that if I come in and start telling you what to do that may cause some friction. In a situation like that, just recognize that you’ve got a person who’s probably proud of the work that they’ve done. If they’re senior to you, maybe start by asking them their opinion. *Hey, we’ve got a situation here, how would you recommend we handle it?* Start by engaging, by listening, by appreciating, by demonstrating a level of respect and understanding, and then you can start to build a bridge. It’s not always easy, but begin in a friendly way.

YS: This question came from Josh from Manhattan. If you could give just one tip, one piece of advice, what would you say is the key to success?

JH: This question is such a hard question. I think what Dale Carnegie might say is that everything starts with our attitude and our outlook. He collected quotes from great people and one of the quotes is from Marcus Aurelius, the Roman emperor, “Our lives are what our thoughts make it.” You have two people in the exact same situation, one who’s happy and one who’s miserable, and the difference is their thoughts. People need to have an awareness of how they think and really be open to the positive. What are the things that I can be grateful for right now? What can I build on? And in any one of us, no matter how bad the situation is, we’ve got a lot of things to be positive about. Do I focus on those or do I focus on the things that didn’t happen? It’s that mindset.

The second thing that I want to mention is about fear. There’s a great quote: “Everything you want is on the other side of fear.” Once we realize that life is going to involve things that are uncomfortable, and that what I want is going to require me to get out of my comfort zone and confront fears, that’s when amazing things can happen in our lives.

YS: My final question is going to be a takeaway, but perhaps we can even share some of the Dale Carnegie principles since they’re so valuable.

JH: Sure. Don’t criticize, condemn, or complain.

That could be misconstrued because clearly there are times we have to give people feedback and so forth. But, if we want to be a friendly person and if we want to build stronger relationships, how do we feel when we’re around people who are complaining all the time and criticizing us like, oh my gosh, it’s enough toxic! What are the things that we’re focused on? We have the ability in our interactions with other people to bring out greatness in them or to just to be negative, and so forth. ▲