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Outlearn Your Competition

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Successful people are obsessed with learning. They out-learn everyone around them. They're voracious readers. Warren Buffet, Bill Gates, Mahatma Gandhi, and Disney CEO Bob Iger read and learn. They finish newspapers, books, audio books, journals, and magazines like Harvard Business Review, Inc, or Forbes while their not-so-committed peers waste their time on worthless entertainment.

I am a huge promoter of reading and learning. All the books I have written, all the seminars I give, all the coaching I do is based on learning. Learning about your industry, learning about yourself, learning about products, learning about your employees and most important, learning about customers. It's my passion and has been for the past 40 some years.

Be relentless in learning new info. If it has anything to do with your industry, be on top of it. Buy manuals, read every book and magazine. Then get involved with industry conferences and put yourself out there. If you have expertise that your colleagues could benefit from—share it! Send them emails with info they can use.

According to Jack Canfield, author of *The Success Principles*, "People who have more information have a tremendous advantage over people who don't. And though you may think it takes years to acquire the knowledge you would need to become super successful, the truth is that simple behaviors such as reading for an hour a day, turning television time into learning time, and attending classes and training programs can make it surprisingly easy to increase your knowledge—and substantially increase your level of success.

Become a people watcher. Watch people, analyze what they do and why. Find people who are where you want to be in life, and get on their schedule. If they've written a book, read it. If they give seminars, go to it. Ask them questions and listen to their stories and answers.

Howard Schultz says to young people who want to be the next Howard Schultz... "Everyone who grows up, no matter where you are in life you had dreams, and the question is, have people convinced you that your dreams cannot come true. As a result of that maybe you would have given up too early. Define what your dream is: dream bigger than that and don't let anyone tell you that you are not good enough, that your dream can't

come true. And don't settle, because you are going to find yourself at 30, 40, or 50 years old saying I could have done that. And you probably could have."

Reading pays off. Since I was 22-years old I personally have read two books a month besides all the magazines, newspapers, and periodicals I get. Mostly they are involving customer service, biographies and autobiographies of great people. I know that I must commit to lifelong self-improvement and learning. It assists me in new ways of thinking and behaving. It helps me to pass on what I have learned to educate the people closest to me including family, friends and business associates. It's what pushes me to work harder at expanding the thought processes of the people that come to my seminars, people that I coach on a daily basis. I learn from them too so it really is a lifelong process.

I highly recommend reading *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, *Meditations* by Marcus Aurelius, *Losing My Virginity* by Richard Branson, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* by Mahatma Gandhi, *As a Man Thinketh* by James Allen, *Eat That Frog* by Brian Tracy, *Long Walk to Freedom* by Nelson Mandela, *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari* by Robin Sharma, and *On the Shortness of Life* by Seneca to get an insight into the rituals of a few well-known and highly successful people.

Mark Cuban says he was stunned some years ago when he read that the average American college graduate reads only 1 book a year. To him, that spelled opportunity. And, he is not alone. Warren Buffet speaks about proactively building an "information advantage" with his own aggressive learning habits and routines.

My take on this is that if you want to be valued, make yourself valuable. Out-learn your competition, out-learn your boss, out-learn yourself...invest in you.

Only good things can happen when you invest in knowledge.—

John Tschohl

John Tschohl is a professional speaker, trainer, and consultant. He is the President and founder of Service Quality Institute (the global leader in customer service) with operations in over 40 countries. John is a self-made millionaire traveling and speaking more than 50 times each year. He is considered to be one of the foremost authorities on service strategy, success, empowerment and customer service in the world. John's monthly strategic newsletter is available online at no charge. He can also be reached on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.