



November, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

What I remember was pain. Pain over the 45 minute commute to work and the one hour drive home every day. I remember the pain over it taking two weeks to find two minutes to pickup my dry cleaning. I remember the pain of marketing reports and opportunity funnel diagrams and upper management and everything else that corporate America reared forth at a 1000 miles an hour. It feels like a hundred years ago I wasn't my own boss - in actuality, it's been a little less than 17.

When I left my job to open my own business all I'd promised myself was that I wouldn't buy another one. There were a few franchises that looked to be a good fit for me with good profit potential and a nice exit strategy, but most of them seemed caught up in the 'flavor of the day'. I needed something where my own intelligence, drive and sales ability would make or break the success and not a gimmick whose catch phrase or nutrition content could turn on a whim.

At this point I hadn't figured out that I needed help so I struck out on my own. No lack of marketing material, no tools, no buying power, no back office support or success stories could slow me down. I'd had a career as a salesman – why couldn't I do this for myself? My last job found me working in the telecom world, and with all the seeming confusion amongst the carriers it seemed like as good a place as any to start blazing my trail.

Maybe it could have worked or maybe not. The fact of the matter is though, there had to be an easier way, so I started to look around. I was quite confident that my decision to get into and stay in an IT or telecommunications related field had to make sense. Consulting in these arenas wasn't new, but as expenditures accelerated and the clutter became more prevalent, those few good players just couldn't keep up. The niche was there and it needed to be filled but little ole me couldn't do it without some partners and they all wanted too big a piece.

It was here that I found Schooley Mitchell. I had known about the organization from my past life with AT&T and had bumped into them on a few occasions. From the carrier side, it was again the pain I remembered first – the pain in reduced margins by their involvement. The marriage seemed to make sense if the numbers worked and in the end I feel I got a lot more value than what I paid. The marketing material, for example; frankly I'd done the homework and knew what it cost to develop it on my own and it almost covered the franchise fee in itself. The tools, the clout with the vendors, the support from head office in those inevitable areas I waded into over my head, and most importantly the network of consultants able to share projects and expertise (a two-way street I might add) all made it the best decision I've ever made.



Sixteen years later and I still work too much, but I work for myself. I still do projections but they're for my goal setting and no one else's. I've seen an increase in sales every year I've been in business and am happy to say we broke the \$2.5 million mark.

Whatever you're doing, stop and look hard at Schooley Mitchell. If you can get out of bed by yourself, you can make this work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Neil Hostein', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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