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By Larry Winget

You Are Being Lied To

Does this really surprise you? At this point in your life do you actually still believe that people are telling you the truth? Please! Business writers and success gurus are not telling you the truth about what it really takes to be successful. They don't care whether you are successful or not. They want to sell books and will say what it takes to do it—even when what they are saying makes no sense at all.

Because it looks and sounds new, it sounds like a secret that no one else has said yet and it must be right for that reason alone.

Just because a guy can write a bestseller about business doesn't mean he really knows about business. It just means a lot of copies of the book were sold. It says more about the buyers than it does about the writer. Remember, Jerry Springer is still one of the most watched television shows on the planet. That doesn't mean it's quality programming; it just means a lot of people watch the show.

I'm a professional speaker and have written a #1 national bestseller myself. I am a member of the Speaker Hall of Fame. I am hired by some of the largest, most respected companies in the world to rant on stage about business and personal success. I attend huge conventions of national associations and do my stuff. I personally know many of the most successful speakers and writers in the country, and I also currently read about one business book every week—all the top sellers. So I actually have some expertise in this area. I know what's being said and I know what people are buying.

Know what? Those business writers and speakers are selling you a big ol' bucket of doo-doo. Yep, they are lying to you. I like most of these guys—many are good friends of mine. But I also know the truth about most of them. Very few of them actually do what they are telling you to do. They talk the talk, but they don't walk the walk.

I know many of the world's leading customer service speakers and writers. Call them. You will be lucky to get your call returned.

I know many of the leading experts on leadership. Most of them can't keep employees working for them because they are such lousy leaders.

I know almost all of the sales gurus personally—the men and women who give the speeches and write the bestselling books. Many can't sell their own sales training.

Let me make this clear: there are no secrets. None. There is no new information. What it took to be successful a thousand years ago is exactly what it takes to be successful today.

I know more motivational experts and success teachers than I can count. (Not really—I can count pretty high.) But let me tell you, most of these guys are anything but successful.

The relationship experts aren't usually in a relationship. The humorists aren't funny. The financial experts are broke. I even know experts on ethics and integrity who don't pay their bills.

These people clearly are not experts. They may be well known and they may have given lots of speeches and sold lots of books, but they aren't true experts. Not in a practical sense. Yet people are clamoring to buy their books and hear their speeches. Again, it says more about the buyer than the seller. People are hungry for the truth. Eager to find the next new thing. So people end up buying these books with the hope of finding something new, some secret that will help them discover what it takes to be successful in business and in life. And while some of those books and speeches have actually helped people, for the most part the information is worthless.

There are over 46,000 books that contain the word “team” or “teamwork.” All selling a load of crap. Teamwork doesn't work. Yes, I know that is business blasphemy, but I am right and everyone else is wrong.

For instance, there is a bestselling book on the market that has a chapter that says “nice managers get better results.” Absolute hogwash. Being nice has nothing to do with results; no more than being mean has anything to do with results. Results are never about nice or mean. Results come from clearly communicating what is expected from the employees, training them to do the job, and then staying involved enough to make sure the job is actually being done. When it is, you reward the employee; when it isn’t, you discipline the employee. In a nutshell, that is the job of a manager. Whether you are a nice manager or a mean manager is not important. It comes down to doing your job. Managers who do their job get results.

There is another book out there at the top of the bestseller lists from a chef who says that the key to leadership is to forget making sure the customer is happy and instead focus on making your employees happy. Is this guy crazy? Who cares if your employees are happy? It is impossible to make an employee happy anyway! (More on that later.) Focus on making the customer happy because it is the customer’s money that keeps you in business. How long is good ol’ Chef going to be able to keep his restaurant open with happy employees and unhappy customers? Remember this: The customer is revenue and the employee is an expense.

See how stupid some business writers are? People are selling stuff that makes absolutely no sense! Yet people buy it. Because it looks and sounds new, it sounds like a secret that no one else has said yet and it must be right for that reason alone.

All I am really an expert at is being stupid and learning from it...I have become an expert at not making the same mistake twice, and learning from every stupid thing I have ever done.

Let me make this clear: there are no secrets. None. There is no new information. What it took to be successful a thousand years ago is exactly what it takes to be successful today. I only remind people of the stuff that eons of data have proved to be true. That is information you can trust. Information that is tried tested and true. But that information doesn't always sell because it doesn't have the same sizzle as the new stuff. And success must be a secret since it has managed to elude people for so long. So sell it as new and say it's a secret and you are almost guaranteed bestseller status.

I recently checked Amazon to find out the number of books containing all of those secrets people want to know about. This is what I found:

There are 1,800 books about the secrets of success. 500 books about the secrets of customer service. 600 books about the secrets of selling. 700 books about the secrets of leadership. You can find the secrets of leadership according to Harry Potter, Santa Claus, Billy Graham and Hitler.

Get this: There are over 46,000 books that contain the word “team” or “teamwork.” All selling a load of crap. Teamwork doesn’t work. Yes, I know that is business blasphemy, but I am right and everyone else is wrong. Teamwork doesn’t work. And the reason is because someone on the team won’t work—which means you no longer have a team. You have a few good people who have to pick up the slack for the bozo that isn’t doing her share. They are frankly pissed off about it too. Because they know, at the end of the project, they will have to share the credit with her because after all, she is on the team. Stupid. Stupid. Stupid.

The world doesn’t want to change or it already would have changed all on its own and without any help from me. People change their lives when they want to, not because I want them to.

Again. There are simply no secrets. When you see the word “secret” you should run! And when you hear that someone has a brand new concept for how to be successful, beware. You don’t need anything brand new; you need to go back to the old and simple stuff that makes sense.

Instead of 500 books about the secrets of customer service, try this: Be nice. Say thank you. A secret? I hope not. Isn't that all you are looking for in a transaction?

Instead of 600 books on the secrets of selling, try this: Ask. Just ask people to buy. Ask, ask, ask, ask, and ask. Become a master asker.

Instead of 700 books about the secrets of leadership, try this: lead. Get out in front of people and give them something to follow. Santa Claus has nothing to teach you about leadership.

“So, Larry, are you an expert? How do we know you are telling us the truth? Aren't you just trying to sell us a book, too?”

Am I an expert? Absolutely! However, I am not an expert at leadership, though I have led many successful organizations. I have led some into stardom and one into bankruptcy. Which did I learn the most from? The one I led into bankruptcy. I am not an expert at customer service. I have delivered both kinds of service: great and suck-y. And I recognize it when I get both, too! I am not an expert at selling, though I have been an award-winning salesperson. I am not an expert at money or financial success, though I have gone from bankruptcy to multi-millionaire. I am certainly not an expert at relationships. I have screwed up many of them.

All I am really an expert at is being stupid and learning from it. In fact, I could be the poster child for stupidity. The key is that I learn from my stupidity. I pay attention to my mistakes. I have become an expert at not making the same mistake twice, and learning from every stupid thing I have ever done. And I have become pretty good at communicating it. I am not

pretending to be something I am not, and I am not saying I am better than any of the others who write the books and give the speeches. I do more wrong before noon than most people will screw up in a week. But I learn from every stupid mistake I make. And I am upfront about it all.

Want things to change? Care.

And of course I want to sell you a book. Hopefully, lots of books. I am a businessman. I do this to make money. I wrote this article to make money. Everything I do is to make money. I don't do this out of some overwhelming need to change the world or to change people's lives. The world doesn't want to change or it already would have changed all on its own and without any help from me. People change their lives when they want to, not because I want them to. No book ever changed a life and no speaker ever did, either. People have the power to change their own lives and no author or speaker should take the credit for it. That statement alone should answer your second question: Am I telling you the truth?

In fact, I am totally addicted to the truth. The cold, hard, ugly, like-it-or-not truth! At least the truth as I see it. That's all any of us can really do: tell the truth as we see it from our own experience, our personal perspective and in our own style. So I will tell you the truth—my truth.

Here are my truths about business. See if they make sense to you. If they do, give them a try. If they don't, give them a try anyway. Chances are what you are doing isn't working, so give my ideas a try. After trying them, if they don't work, then move on and try what someone else has to say. And know that you are a little closer to discovering your own truth. If they do work, throw yourself a little party because you have learned something that works.

Larry's Truths about Business:

Apathy is killing business. Employees don't care whether they serve the customer well or even if they serve the customer at all. Managers don't care enough to make sure employees are serving customers or doing their job. And customers don't care enough to complain because they are confident not much will change even when they do. Want things to change? Care. As a customer, care enough to complain. As a manager, care enough to make sure your employees are doing their job. As an employee, care enough to serve the customer well and do your job.

Attitude doesn't matter. Motivational gurus have made trillions of dollars telling us that having a positive attitude is the key to success. Wrong! You can be positive all you want and still be positively wrong, positively lazy and positively stupid. I don't always have a great attitude. In fact, many times I have a really crappy attitude. That makes me a real human being. Things go wrong and affect my attitude. Luckily, I am not paid to be positive. You aren't paid for your great attitude either. You are paid to do your job. I'll take Mr. Crappy Attitude who gets the work done, and you can have Mr. Positive who believes that there are no problems, only opportunities. I'll go with the guy who knows a problem when he sees it, gets ticked off by it and solves the problem!

Who cares if your employees are happy? I have employees and I don't care whether they are happy or not. I don't pay them to be happy. I pay them to do the job. Know what? They don't care if I am happy, either. They just want me to do my job so they can get paid. It's not about being happy. It's about getting the job done. Besides, I learned a long time ago that I couldn't make another person happy. I can't be happy enough to make them happy. I can't get mad enough or sad enough to make them happy. People are happy *when* they want to be and *if* they want to be. No other person has any impact on it.

You don't have to love your job—but it helps. Too much has been said about loving your job. Even I used to fall into this trap. You don't have to love your job to be good at it—but it helps. I don't love what I do. Oh wait, you think speaking and writing is what I do? It isn't. I only spend about 100 hours a year on stage. That's two weeks work if you put it all together, barely enough to count. That stage time is the part of my business that I love and it is the payoff for what I really do for a living. I travel for a living. I pack my crap, go to the airport, put up with the security stupidity, and the abuse of the don't-give-a-damn flight attendants, only to get to another airport and wait an hour for my bag that statistics say has probably been pilfered, then get in a cab that smells like crap driven by a guy who can't speak English and drives out of the way to pad his bill, then check into a hotel where they can't find my reservation so I can order up some room service that will be late and cold and wrong. Then I go on stage, love my hour I'm up there and start over again. That is the reality of what I do for a living. In my spare time, I write a book or two and shoot a television show. I don't love what I do most of the time. I put up with it because I love those hundred hours. And I'm not complaining—the hundred hours worth the trouble or I wouldn't do it.

The good news is that none of us are paid to love our jobs. You aren't. You never got a check notated in the notes section, "Because he loves his job." You got your check because you did your job, not because you loved your job. If you love your job, that is a bonus.

Not firing people is a cancer on your business. People don't do their jobs. You see it every day. I know I do. I go into businesses where I have to beg people to answer a question or pay any attention to me. I have to break up conversations between workers in order to get them to take my order and my money. People take breaks twice as long as they are entitled to. They come in late. They call in sick when they aren't. And they don't get fired. Why? Why do we let people by with not doing their job? Fear. We are afraid. We spend so much time and money worrying about the rights of the employee that we forget about the rights of the business. If an employee isn't doing his job— isn't earning his money— isn't doing what he is paid to do—he has no rights. Fire him.

Keeping a bad employee destroys your credibility with your other employees. Bad behavior then spreads like a cancer because there are no visible consequences. This is inexcusable because ultimately the person who suffers most is the person who should suffer least: the customer.

“But what if I fire him and he sues me?” You are right about this one. He might sue you. We have become a big sue-happy society. People sue for everything. Get a paper cut? Sue the bastards for unsafe working environment. Someone compliment your outfit? Sue for sexual harassment because obviously, “Nice dress” really meant, “Let's have sex.” So yes, you might get sued. Fire him anyway. Remember, it's better to pay a really good attorney than a really bad employee.

Do the right thing no matter what. Ethics is a matter of black and white—not grey. It's either right or wrong, good or bad, hello or goodbye, you are either in the way or on the way. How will you know whether something is the right thing to do or the wrong thing to do? If you have to ask, it's the wrong thing. You always know the right thing, you only question when it is the wrong thing. So do the right thing. Even when it is unpopular or might cost you money or be embarrassing. In the long run, consistently doing the right thing will pay off every time.

Larry's all-time best advice for business success:

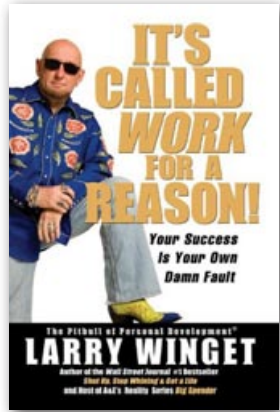
Do what you said you were going to do, when you said you were going to do it, in exactly the way you said you were going to do it. You won't ever get any better business advice than that.

Be there when you said you would be there. Deliver when you said you would deliver. Call when you said you would call. Be a person who can be counted on by keeping his word every time.

“If I do all of this, Larry, will I be successful?”

Beats me. Success is a funny thing. Sometimes you can do everything right and it still all goes wrong. If you don't understand that, then you are naïve. So I can't guarantee your success. However, don't do any of these things and I can guarantee your failure.

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For more details or to buy a copy of Larry Winget's, *It's Called Work For A Reason* [click here](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Larry Winget is an attitude looking for a place to happen. Like Dr. Phil on steroids, he has developed a signature style that is by turns both eye-opening and hilarious. He is caustic, sarcastic, and abrasive and yet what he says makes perfect sense. Larry Winget is the author of the #1 Wall Street Journal Bestseller, *Shut Up, Stop Whining & Get A Life*. He is also the host of the A&E reality show, *Big Spender*. His new book, *It's Called Work For A Reason*, is available starting Dec. 28, 2006 by Gotham Books.

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