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EDITOR'S PICK

FEATURED

Biz expo speaker provides fan-building tips

BY MELINDA J. OVERSTREET moverstreet@glasgowdailytimes.com 12 hrs ago



Derron Steenbergen, president and founder of the Swagger Institute, which specializes in sales and leadership training, about building a business fan base during the South Central Kentucky Business Expo on Tuesday at Ralphie's Fun Cen Glasgow. Melinda J. Overstreet / Glasgow Daily Times



GLASGOW – Derron Steenbergen said he was thrilled, albeit a bit more nervous than usual, to be kicking off the 2019 South Central Kentucky Business Expo on Tuesday morning.

Steenbergen is the president and founder of the Swagger Institute, which specializes in sales and leadership training, and he has worked in at least 20 states doing that. He also serves as chief revenue officer for Glasgow-based Commonwealth Broadcasting Corp., which owns and operates 17 radio stations in Kentucky.

The Western Kentucky University graduate said that in the past three weeks he's been in Texas, Indiana and North Dakota and when his year ends after a trip to New Mexico, he will have spoken in 26 cities the past year.

“I only tell you that for one reason,” he said. “I have not been more honored, more intimidated at the same time to stand in front of my hometown, because when you're standing in front of people that you know and you like and you love, there's just a little bit more pressure than when you stand in front of a group of people you don't know.”

He said he had about six hours' worth of material that he was condensing into about 30 minutes.

“But I want you to know this: I am really, really honored to be here. I love this community and this even is an opportunity for you to really set up the rest of your year and the years going forward,” Steenbergen said. “When you take 70-plus businesses and you put all this opportunity to network and relationship building together in one place, it really is unique in a lot of communities that are our size that don't do this, and they should.”

The annual event is organized by the Glasgow-Barren County Chamber of Commerce and took place at Ralphie's Fun Center, where the roller rink and adjacent area are converted into booth spaces where more than 70 local organizations – mostly businesses, but also a few nonprofit agencies and educational institutions – had set up tables and displays. Many had trinkets and/or

candies to give away to those who walked through and drawings for prizes for which people could register, but all of them had plenty of information to share with potential customers or interested parties.

Steenbergen started his presentation about building a fan base with a twist on an old adage: “An APPLE a day keeps failure away.” He discussed the elements of that kind of apple – attitude, preparation, presentation, loving what you're doing and energy.

Your attitude needs to be checked every single day, he said, and preparation breeds confidence.

“How do people see you?” he asked on the presentation aspect. “Did you pass the eyeball test? Does your business pass the eyeball test?”

He asked the same question about storefronts, restrooms and showrooms.

“How are you seen by your potential customers,” Steenbergen said. “If you don't pass the eyeball test, you're going to have a really hard time building your fan base.”

He said life takes us all down different paths, and we don't always end up where we think we will. Very few are doing what they thought they would be when they were growing up.

Steenbergen said that while it may not always be easy, it's really important to love what you do and for those around you to believe that you love it.

He said there are too many times when he walks into local businesses that he doesn't feel any energy.

“You've got to ask yourself, 'Am I lukewarm? Is my business lukewarm?' Listen, 'Is our community lukewarm?' Because we need energy, and we need it every single day. And you've got to bring it every single day,” he said. “That, right there, if I stop right now, if you took that out of here, we might be good to go.”

Steenbergen went on to discuss building a fan base internally and externally.

“Sometimes the best way to grow our customer base is to focus on what's going on internally. 'Are we doing a good job in growing our current customers? Are we giving them the experience they deserve?'" he said.

Sometimes working on that includes things like visual improvements to the business space, for example, but it also needs to focus on how customers are greeted and with what kind of energy. It is absolutely crucial to thank customers for their business, he said, after noting that was the most important thing for the audience to remember.

Building the fan base externally involves things like making sure neither your message nor your audience is splintered.

“Whatever you do, you have to own it,” Steenbergen said, providing an example or two of how it is better to focus on reaching out to a smaller number really well to form meaningful relationships than to try to make briefer impressions on many more.

He said too many are confusing “likes” on social media to be the same thing as customers who will engage with that business.

“There's research that supports for every 5,000 views, only five will actually click through into your page,” Steenbergen said. “If you are only using social media, you are never going to build a brand that you want your business to have.”

The fact that people, at least those over 40, can still recite a McDonald's jingle from decades ago listing the ingredients of a Big Mac – “two all-beef patties ...” – demonstrates the value of frequency of message.

“Social media has a place, but if you're not building a brand with traditional media, the social media will not be as effective. You can have the greatest website in the world, if someone Googles you or your product category in your town, they're still going to go to the place that they know something about,” he said.

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Remember that Glasgow City Hall will be closed on Monday, September 2, 2019, in observance of Labor Day.

Likewise, the following departments will also be closed on Monday, September 2, 2019 in observance of Labor Day:

- Glasgow Regional Landfill
- Sanitation Department
- Street Department
- Transit Department

Monday's garbage and recycling will be collected on Tuesday, September 3, 2019. Please have all garbage and recycling at the curbside by 7:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 3, 2019.

Please visit www.cityofglasgow.org for all City of Glasgow holiday announcements during the year.

Thank you, and please have a safe Labor Day!

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Mon, Sep 02

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In observance of
Labor Day

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Wed, Sep 04




Chair Yo
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