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Elizabeth Harrington

After initially working her way up through the corporate executive ranks with Xerox, on to a senior government post in Toronto, Canada, then spending the past decade exploring the rollercoaster ride as an entrepreneur with Unicity International, she's uniquely prepared to understand the demands of each career role as well as the best practices required for extreme success.

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Elizabeth, you are one of those people who are just on fire! To what do you attribute your enthusiasm?

Isn't it true that when you find your passion and your purpose it's not work? I've just returned from a company convention in California and I'm pumped with the exciting news unveiled by Unicity International.

Unicity is emerging as a giant in the network marketing industry and you have been with the company through many of its growing pains. What made you stay the course and not jump to another company?

What a great question! You're right, with all the mergers, acquisitions, buyouts and new owners these past 6 years, chaos has reigned.

My ability to adapt to an ever changing and unknown business climate has been really strengthened! Through all of this, not only have we survived but become more successful, and built such a strong foundation which will carry us into our brilliant future! We have been the industry's best kept secret that won't be secret for long. As an example of the kind of innovative strategies, I don't think there has ever been a case, especially for a company our size, where the number one distributor came into ownership.

Stewart Hughes, our new CEO, is from the field and his story is quite remarkable.

To have the number one distributor become CEO and co-owner definitely brings a feeling of true collaboration and partnership between those in the corporate offices and those in the field.

I've certainly experienced the opposite and it was more difficult to get things done. With Stewart on board, more time is spent on finding solutions together not spending time just complaining about what isn't quite right yet!

How long have you been involved in network marketing?

I started with Unicity International, in Toronto about 12 years ago. Like so many women, I came into the business as a happy product user.

What were you doing when you were introduced to the product?

I was in a very high stress executive job. At that time I was working in the Mayor's office for the Toronto Regional Government, in Economic Development. I really was way too busy to take on something new. I did try the product because it was guaranteed to make you lose weight. And I found that it worked! It worked so well that it started creating

product sales, because even though I never did it intentionally as a business at that time, I started having to carry the packs in the trunk of my car and I was constantly replenishing them.

I would be at a dinner meeting and all the women would be grabbing me wanting to know what I had done to lose weight. So the first lesson I learned was be a product of the product.

Really, in our business it's about enjoying health.

I always believe in the philosophy, if it's about health and nutrition, be a product of the product and do whatever it takes, so that you can enjoy, to the best of your ability, extraordinary health.

It certainly works a lot more easily in terms of being a postcard. I came in, I started on the products, I was very successful on the products, and then became successful just sharing that with people.

So what was the incentive that turned your focus onto this being a real business?

Well, I've always loved high performance cars. I had a 300 ZX which was getting really expensive to maintain. One day I received a letter stating I had qualified for a \$500 car bonus. This was about 3 months after people started to see results from the weight loss products and buy.

And I thought, "What!?" That was such a big surprise to me, to see something like that result from such little effort on my part. Then I thought, "I wonder what would happen if I actually put some effort into this and treated it more like a business?"

And, as you've now learned, that's a brilliant question! I'm curious, Elizabeth, you mentioned that other people had approached you about their product

or opportunity over the years without much success on their part. How were you approached *this* time that made you open to trying those products in the first place?

There was a wonderful couple , John and Sherri Busswood, out of Vancouver. They were top leaders with the company and John just kept in touch with me. He was terrific at follow up.

So they just dripped on you over time?

Yes! And this needs a bit of explanation here so I can share why the time was right for me.

Because I think it's critical and points to the importance of building relationships over time so you know when things have changed for people.

I knew I wasn't happy. Great job, great money, great benefits, but working such long hours that I had absolutely no time for balance— I just knew I was burning out.

At the same time I knew I needed to have more. There was something missing, I think it was around having a sense of real meaning about what I did each and every day in terms of contribution and service.

About 18 months after John and Sherri had first called me, I had them fax me a copy of their monthly check. I saw that and thought, "Oh my gosh! This is what they're earning after only 18 months?" The check was just under \$40,000 for that month!

So I figured I better take a look and told them I wanted to try the products first.

Now, as I said, I did not consciously choose network marketing, but I had such a great result with the product and found I felt good sharing it with others and then saw such a great result there, too, with that unexpected car bonus,

so I started looking at things differently.

And when people can see results, I find it so simple to succeed.

And what can you say to those who aren't, yet, seeing results, Elizabeth?

It comes back to the whole idea of demonstrating commitment.

People care much more about the fact that you're taking the steps necessary to make changes than having already reached the final goal.

I have had some people say, "Well, I can't really get started in the business until I've lost thirty pounds myself, first."

And I say, "That's not really true."

I think that if people see you making lifestyle changes and getting really committed to doing that, they are very open to what you are doing.

We have a five-step to health program and the first two steps are all about hydrating, then walking. Those are two vital steps that will have immediate positive results in your life. You're going to start having more energy, feel better, then look better. People will notice the difference in you —that's what people care about.

So the new understanding on my part is that there is no 'magic bullet' and any kind of life-changing habit has to come through a series of small steps first to get the ultimate result.

Is it simply a result of your listening for people's needs, that helps you decide whether to invite people to become customers or invite them to become

business partners? In other words, you came into the business as a result of success with the products so I'm wondering if your focus is on that or if you focus primarily on potential business builders.

I choose to support both customers and business partners the same way. Helping create their end result vision, supporting them in steadily taking simple daily steps and adjusting actions when necessary to bring them closer to reaching their ultimate vision.

Putting people first!

I have changed my approach depending on where we were as a company because different talents are often required at different times of growth in the organization but I've never lost sight of one fact.

I have led with the business but I'm much more comfortable, and I'm more comfortable in educating and teaching my people, to lead with health first.

It's a more natural way. I don't know exactly where I got this or where I've studied it with network marketing in the past, but we have to think, if we're going to be recognized as a professional business industry, we need to have a focus on customers.

I don't know of any other business that is successful in business, without having loyal customers.

It's something I'm really quite passionate about. If you haven't got customers, and happy loyal customers, then where is the successful business? Unicity is in business today *because* of the hundreds of thousands of loyal satisfied customers we have around the globe!

So let me see if I have this correct, Elizabeth. You're saying that a business isn't a business unless somebody is selling a product...

Unless somebody is *buying* a product! And I don't mean just for themselves. There are different ways of looking at it but I know for me, what gives me the greatest joy, is helping people that I care about make big differences in their health!

That is really what turns me on! That's what gets me out of bed in the morning and excited about each day.

Elizabeth, is that another part of the reason you've stayed with one company for so many years despite the challenges that have cropped up at various times?

Certainly, that's a big part of it. One thing I've discovered over time is that there is no place where the grass is greener! For one thing, the company was always changing, and maybe more importantly, to succeed, I've had to change!

If something is not working I've learned that I can make a change and get different results.

I say with all sincerity, that I've had the *luck* of being with the one company that changed *so much*, and went through the different evolutions that I could learn from in each step and become more aware of what I think works.

It really is going back to basics— by asking basic questions. This is one of the things that I say to people, if I approach them about the business, I ask that they try the products first. I don't want somebody to come on board and then find they don't really believe in nutrition or healthy living, or hear "I don't believe in the need to supplement".

We need people in our organization who are passionate about making lives different and making lives better through healthy living, that's our mission.

It sounds like that approach itself helps professionalize and change the image of the network marketing industry. Do you agree?

Yes, right. That's what many of us want to do at Unicity.

We believe we have built such a strong foundation that we know we can survive anything. We are proud of our accomplishments and excited about our future.

I did get a couple of interesting statistics from people at the convention and again, I am laughing because we seem to be the best kept secret in the industry. Our annual wholesale sales right now are just under \$500 Million, we're debt-free as of this month, we have hundreds of thousands of happy distributors around the world, we have an amazing array of science backed products and yet no one has heard of us!

So it's an ideal time to put all of the lessons we've learned into practice.

For me, in terms of my leadership, I'm still going to lead with what I believe people get passionate about.

We have just launched a flagship product, Bios Life Complete, that takes us into the huge world of cardiovascular health. BiosLife Complete is the *only* natural solution to cardiovascular disease that is clinically proven to be more effective in lowering cholesterol, than the top Statin drugs, without any of the negative side-effects. We're listed between Lipitor and Zocor in the Physician's Desk Reference. Those two drugs alone do over \$25 Billion in sales per year.

People around the world are looking to reduce their cholesterol. The American Heart and American Diabetes Associations endorsed the earlier version of this product last year.

BiosLife Complete was launched last week at our Convention and we expect the global sales to be trajectory once we get the word out!

So what kinds of things did you do to start building your business in the beginning and what are you doing today?

Well, I don't know if I can remember all the way back to the beginning. I do know that I have made as many mistakes as one could make and still be successful.

There always was the latest and the greatest idea and I tried many things.

I did attract, because of the weight loss product, a lot of women. It seems that women are more willing to express an interest in health and nutrition.

Having always been a part of the executive team, very much dominated by men, I wasn't used to working with women so that was a novel learning experience right there. It hasn't all been fun –these learning lessons can be painful sometimes.

What I'm learning is to succeed in anything, I must learn to embrace failure— to welcome it!

***One of my favorite quotes is
"Failure is inspirational to
satisfaction",***

This is from a great book I read recently, *People First* by Jack Lannon . To grow, you must make mistakes and your dissatisfaction with these mistakes should inspire you to do better.

I've really done a lot of that in the last twelve years, particularly in dealing with women.

Do you realize that 85% of the purchases made in health, beauty and nutrition are made by women? They are purchasing these things for themselves, their children and often, their spouses. So the focus needs to be on understanding the value that women have in our industry, both in terms of being part-timers and being the powerful purchasers.

So everything I'm learning and doing right now is how to make it work, and especially how to support women in making it work.

And as a leader of the company, it sounds like you also recognize one of the glaring statistics, that so many don't realize, that most of our businesses consist of women and most of them part-time workers. Is that correct?

That's right, and yet so often it's the case where so many of the top leaders are men.

Now I've noticed with the changeover in my company, there are more women and we are being listened to because many of us are quite strong and opinionated and passionate about what we do.

I guess also because of the nature of the big changes, we had a women's luncheon that I co-hosted at the conference, and it was sold out! And the men wanted to be part of it, they didn't want it to be exclusive and were protesting, "Wait a minute, we have to have this information, too, because we work with all the women!"

I think it really points to how we need to be aware of how we relate to one another.

Elizabeth, this is fascinating, as you mentioned that there were challenges for you when you first started in the unfamiliar area of working with women. So what were some of the first differences you noticed in working with women compared to men?

Yes, I had a real difficulty! It was such a challenge. I came out of University in the late '70's and was always the first woman in middle-management where I was working, and I zipped up the fast track. I spent a lot of time doing everything I could, learning to think and be like a little man. Women are not little men! In fact, that was the theme at one of our trainings. We are not little men! We're very different.

It's been a great joy for me to be in this business to really be able to capitalize on learning and getting in touch with that inner femininity and *also* grow a business.

In terms of what I've learned, women do not like showing up for meetings unless the meetings are of great value. Women will more easily show up on teleclasses and teleconference calls, in the comfort of their own home. We also want to have everything easily accessible in terms of information. We love lots and lots of information.

Women want information. They want to know how what you offer compares to similar things, and if you can provide them this information they absolutely will appreciate you for making their job much easier.

Women also love to share good things with each other so we love chat rooms and forums. Men don't necessarily feel this as strongly. One of the key differences I see today is that men will tend to want to recruit you into the business and then, maybe see, down the road, if you might become friends. Women are the exact opposite,

Women want to first see if there is a basis for friendship and if so, then over time, maybe look at doing business together.

These differences certainly mean we'd benefit by changing the way we're marketing. If it's recruit, recruit, recruit it's simply not going to appeal to women and I can't help but wonder, "Who are we going to be recruiting?"

***It's got to be all about training on
how to build relationships and
especially online;***

Coming up with ways to encourage more and more women to try the product, become educated, and get passionate about making a difference.

Just looking at the demographics, I'm what they call a 'prime time woman', a baby boomer women who is affluent and prepared to do whatever it takes to have vital aging— we know aging is inevitable but

getting old is optional. Prime time women are controlling the world's wealth.

So what I'm hearing is that one of the valuable things you've learned is to talk to women the way women like to be talked to?

Yes, and I've been quite surprised that I knew as little about marketing to women as I did. Actually, I'm really appreciative that I've had the time in the last couple of years to do some research so that I have a new clarity about how I want to lead my organization and be able to plan my next direction.

I know that most women need to feel that they are passionate about something.

It is about living a life that women can only dream of and it's not about the fancy yacht, or the mansion in the hills.

And that's what I used to do, wave the big check, talk about all the great lifestyle things I'd bought and now realize that is so wrong.

Considering that I've learned that 60% of all spouses of people in network marketing are not very supportive then waving a big check is probably going to scare away most women. The last thing most women want in their lives is more work! Women want to feel that they are doing something to help contribute, to help make the world a better place.

Health is something so vitally important to most women, for their children, for their loved ones and for themselves. And if it's something like heart health, it's something that will impact all of us.

Another thing, too, is getting to women about the freedom of choice because many women don't even know what that means. It's going after what it would mean to have a life like I live.

And what is your life like, Elizabeth?

I am living my dream life! I'm sitting here talking with you on the phone, with my feet up and my cat, Sammy in my lap while the fire crackles in the fireplace on a cold wintry Friday afternoon in Minneapolis. I'm not stuck in rush hour traffic; I'm not frenzied with a five page 'to-do' list, and only a few hours to get all of that done before all of the chores start for the weekend! My husband Tom and I travel to wonderful places, are going for our Masters in Life Coaching, I am writing a book, oh there are so many interesting things to learn about and get involved in.

I'm able to enjoy a quality of life that I would only have been able to dream of years ago. But it's about freedom of choice; it's not about the yacht. Of course, I still have a high-performance car which I love, but the whole thing is that for most women, the whole dream would be very different than what we've been trained to believe in the past, from leaders in the industry, mostly men.

So what's going to appeal to a woman would be having the choice to stay home with her children or grandchildren; being able to have a buffer for the husband who is stressed out about impending layoffs; to take the family on a vacation, add to the kids college fund, have the freedom to choose for themselves or their husbands, to accept the early retirement package offered by many companies trying to avoid layoffs.

I'm part of the Purpose Project out of the University of Minnesota, which is just an incredible thing. It is all about Boomers deciding what to do with the second half of their lives.

I have so much fun doing what I do every day that I don't plan on ever retiring. Travel more, work less in 3-5 years-that is my plan. I left the "grind" or the "rat-race"

12 years ago when I joined Unicity

I think those with similar desires and values are the kind of people I am going to be attracting, the kind of people I want to attract. Life is meant to be fully engaged in— play full out!

And looking back do you find that that is, indeed, the way your organization is growing? That you've learned to share those values and now you are attracting more of that?

I do know people are seeing me live it. And it is a very powerful thing. It's all a state of *being*, not just talking about.

And I get to do different things now, things I never would have had time for before. You know, people lose their dreams at a very early age. I think it was a study out of Harvard that reported something like 78% of all people have lost their ability to dream before the age of 25. That's pretty sad.

Do you share the feeling that network marketing ends up giving people back that ability to dream?

The very pillars our company is built on are 'hope' and 'freedom'. I agree with that completely and yet I think it's important to realize that maybe the dreams are not identical.

For instance, my dreams are not necessarily the same as those of somebody that hasn't had a successful corporate career. Obviously, in twelve years, I've enjoyed an incredible amount of wonderful benefits created by my success with this company, but if I'm talking to somebody that is just starting out in their careers, or for that matter, coming to the second half of their careers, their dreams are going to be very, very different than each other's.

I think that sometimes it's about, and certainly I'm not limiting them here, but in the beginning most women are looking to earn \$300-\$500 a month, and that's their dream today.

And think about it, \$300-\$500 a month working part time just 3-6 hours a week? For most women that I'm talking to, this could change their life forever.

That is where I'm coming from. Finding out about that and helping them then start to dream bigger! Once they get to that predictable, sustainable monthly income, one where they are starting to have grown in self-esteem and they blossom, that's the gift I want to give.

I'm at a stage now where I want to mentor. I want to give back. And I realize that it's starting people where they are at, not jumping into the 'thinking big' but just getting them to think \$300-\$500 a month. That's a good income in terms of investing. And again, the key words here are, predictably and in a sustainable fashion.

I haven't seen enough of that kind of an approach in our industry. And that's what our company is committed to also. Not just jumping into the big, huge dream, because I think that's where most women shut you off and start to shut down.

It sounds like you're talking about the value of baby steps.

Yes, because starting off with the big dream does have its implications.

I know, from first hand experience. I've had the opportunity to see the reality. I know the time required and how hard you have to work to earn a six-figure income in this business— in any business for that matter. And it's doing a disservice to people to imply it's anything less.

Now, I suppose someone *can* be lucky, like winning the lottery, and happen to sponsor someone that shoots them quickly to the top of the pay plan.

But I've been doing this business for twelve years and I think that I would prefer to have people know and believe that they can earn a few hundred, then \$1000 a month, then \$2000 - \$3000 a month in a few years, have them love what they do and feel they are offering a service while learning

new skill sets and developing competency levels in different aspects. Teach them that if they want more they need to do more than the 3-6 hours a week.

How do you do that, Elizabeth? How do you get people to understand that and how do you, in fact, teach people new skills?

I've been part of a pilot project with the company and we've been working on an interesting program. It's one that's evolving, naturally, and is called Unicity's Strategic Business Training.

We really can show anyone how, with an investment of three to six hours a week, they could earn up to \$2500-\$3500.00 a month within a two to three year period, *anyone!*

They have three levels of coaching and everybody is coached in a way that treats them with dignity and respect. They have to be accountable to do the action steps.

We invite people to take a look at the business rather than actively recruiting. It's about exploring the possibilities of working together and seeing how it fits for both of us, rather than just recruiting people. This is something I think has been missing in our industry as well.

We are setting a very respectful, professional tone right from the beginning.

So do you offer a daily plan of action or something to your people?

It's more of a weekly action plan since we are talking about only three to six hours a week. It's a step by step approach and there are different levels so when you accomplish one you move onto the next.

And do you find that to be duplicatable?

Yes, that's the whole idea, that it's simple to duplicate. It's a program that is constantly evolving and improving. We are also going to be looking for serious entrepreneurs, who have more time and energy to put into global

markets, because we are a company embarking on building huge momentum; we're going to be growing really big, fast.

This will require more activity, more focus, and we will need to have a different approach for people like that.

We are deeply committed to approaches that will honor and provide dignity, where people can move at their own pace and create that income with a program that is totally duplicatable.

In addition to Unicity's Strategic Business Training program, what else would you say are powerful tools you've used for building your business?

I started a Fabulous Woman's Network in Toronto, in Fall 2001, What a great resource. Women get together every 90 days or so to share stories, great Thai food (Sasi's on Jarvis) good wine, and make great friends.

It has been wildly popular, thanks to the Fabulous Women who have been involved from the beginning. We are starting one here in the Twin Cities, It's been a really great way for us to have fun, get to know each other, build relationships, expand our networks and, of course, it's been really great for the business. So many women have become customers, and others have joined as business partners. Women will get together to have fun, laugh together, share stories and learn new things.

I do a lot of one on ones with friends and neighbors just because we love to get together and talk about things. Recently, I've been very successful in my new neighborhood. As I get to know more and more of my new neighbors, and they find out what I do, I find most of them want to learn more and are very interested in their own health and their family's health.

Again, I think it's a matter of getting women educated. Don't get me wrong, I love working with men, but when the industry revolves around 80% being women, I think it's important to pay attention to them.

The number of women who are starting businesses each day is staggering.

I think we have a great gift, in terms of our industry, in helping people learn the various steps that are required to be successful in your own business.

This is important, to be successful in your own business *but not alone!* Women are great at this, as I find women really like to work on projects together. Since so few of us experienced team sports in school, I realize working on teams, and team building is something we also need to teach.

I'm very good at things like creating strategic alliances and working in collaboration. And it doesn't have to be just within your own organization. I often work with people in different organizations. Why limit ourselves? I think we will all be more successful when we play to our strengths and find others who complement our talents.

And what a relief to be invited to play on your own strengths!

I know! This business, when done properly, is brilliant and flexible. That's what's so exciting for me. It's so intellectually stimulating, too. My passion before networking was all about organizational development so this is a perfect thing for me in terms of... it never ends!

The learning, the growing and the helping to understand what sustains and builds successful organizations, is never ending!

Wow! So many great things to focus on! If you had to name one or two things, Elizabeth, what would you say is the *best* thing about network marketing for you?

Besides my husband, who I met at a company event 4 years ago, I would say, the freedom! The freedom to choose, at the beginning of every single

day, what it is you are going to do and who you are going to be. There is absolutely no limitation, other than those self-imposed ones, and the great thing is that as you reach one goal, you get to redesign and create new ones. *There is absolutely no limitation!*

It's about really having the control and the freedom to wake up every morning to new possibilities.

That, to me, is totally invigorating and is the very *best* thing about network marketing, no limitations and freedom of choice.

Now I'm at a bit of a different stage and it's not just about *my* choices and *my* freedom, but coming to where I am now and realizing that after twelve years, it's also about the responsibility I have around mentoring and teaching others. That to me is becoming a really important part of a new direction.

And wouldn't you agree that you'll be able to contribute greatly there *because* you've walked the walk you have?

Yes! There have been so many chances to learn from the philosophy of "failure is inspirational to satisfaction"

There's such a gift there!

There really is, because as women we are taught to be perfect and if we do something wrong we're very hard on ourselves and as a group we've been hard on each other. I think part of it is learning to support each other more and focus on the positives, not on all the little negatives. I think that's another gift that we can give as prime time women. Very few people actually stand up and talk about the ultimate lessons it took to get to the goal, and it's not a straight line, it's never a straight line. How boring would that be?

It's about who you become in the journey and finding the people who share similar values and then creating the collaborations that I think are necessary to really make huge change.

That's what we're up to today; being part of that new guard, part of the new vision.

Thank you so much, Elizabeth. We really appreciate you!

Elizabeth was married in Maui, Hawaii 2 1/2 years ago to Tom Spindler. Together they are living a balanced happy life in a suburb of Minneapolis MN, where frequent visitors are bunnies, deer, and possum!

She and Tom escape to Maui as often as they can to enjoy their Pacific paradise!

Following her passion of being the best leader and mentor she can be, she and Tom are currently becoming certified as Master Coaches and becoming part of the Purpose Project at the University of Minnesota (its going to be all about vital aging over the next 2 decades)