

STORY | LEADERSHIP

Robert Middleton – I Can Powerfully Affect People

“Your success is based upon how many people you show your product and your business to”

from **The Greatest Networkers in the World** by John Milton Fogg

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Robert Middleton grew up in Charlottesville, Virginia, “with a silver spoon in my mouth and one in each hand,” he says. But at the time he was growing up, Bob didn’t realize that.

He lived on a 744-acre Hereford cattle farm thinking “everyone knew what dirt smelled like.” It was his grandparents’ estate. They were industrialists and they founded a company called Babcock and Wilcox (B&W) back in 1856. It’s currently the site of the University of Virginia’s Birdwood golf course.

It was a *big* farm. They had stables, a dairy, dairy cattle, sheep, horses, even Hereford show cattle. They did 55,000 bales of hay every season. Bob grew up loving the machinery and the tool houses, and sitting around the potbellied stove with all the farm hands from all over the world. Real true cowboys teaching him cowboy talk, which was mostly four-letter words. As a little boy, Bob had a ball.

“I just didn’t know we were wealthy,” he said, “and my mom made sure that we had a normal life and normal friends and weren’t ostentatious—and we were nice folks. She was a lovely, down-home lady from West Virginia. She had no airs. Everyone loved her.”

When Bob was 14 his parents got divorced. His mom kept her four boys and that was about all she got. They went from riches to rags.

“When things are taken away,” Bob says, “you realize what you had and I realized that it was a beautiful place to live and it was a lifestyle of a different era and time.”

Bob ended up being raised mostly by his godfather who taught him one thing— how to work, hard.

Bob went to college in Virginia and got drafted during Vietnam. Everybody he knew that was in the draft had put two quarters in the jar and Bob was the lowest number, so he won the pot – \$48.25 in quarters. The only thing he'd ever won in his life. He was so excited he forgot he was being drafted.

Bob, who had never been on a jet plane, flew to Chicago and then to boot camp in Kenosha, Wisconsin. It was February. It was 25 below zero some days. It was not fun. And somehow he ended up in Seattle, Washington, at a deep-sea diving school.

When he got out of the military, Bob went back to college in Virginia, finished that and promptly moved to the Cayman Islands. He bought some property there and had a hull inspection service for an oil transfer company.

"No one told me it took real money to live down there," Bob said. He moved to Atlanta when he ran out of money and started in the construction industry. Pretty soon he had a couple crews working and was framing houses during the big housing boom.

Bob worked for Rutenberg Homes out of Florida "I built the houses, they collected the money," he says. He did that for five years and learned about business, specifically about budgeting and planning.

"I learned about making a list every night for what you're going to do the next day," Bob said, "and picking the top six things that are income generating and grabbing the one you absolutely don't want to do and doing that one first. To this day I still make lists every night."

Bob still plans his work and he's still focused on income generating activities.

And the budgeting he learned taught him how to manage his affairs and never forget from whence he came. Even when Bob was making big money in Network Marketing (and a couple of million a year for many years was big money) he didn't go crazy. He saw the people around him. The money just made them more of what they already were.

"Being in the construction industry and dealing with the public as clients, building a house for people, it's quite a relationship," Bob says. It's very similar to Network Marketing; building an organization and having those key player relationships."

And then... Bob went to an opportunity meeting.

"A friend of mine, Steve, called me and kept bugging me to go to this meeting," Bob said. "I had moved into building material sales and he was one of my biggest clients. So I said, 'If you'll buy me lunch, I'll listen to anything you say.' I hated eating alone."

"So, he bought me lunch and kind of started drawing circles, and... I was bored to death. Then he said, 'Look, we need to go to a meeting.' And I said, 'If you will never mention Network Marketing to me again, I will go to any meeting you want.' And I went."

There were a couple of hundred people in the room. They played this video with some country music by Rex Allen on it and the guy in the front of the room had white hair that was swept way back. He had been a funeral plot salesman. Bob was kind of impressed, but he wasn't *really* paying attention.

And then, at the very end of the meeting, they gave Bob's friend Steve an award for earning \$16,000 in one month.

Bob had never made \$16,000 in his life in one month—in anything. That really got his attention.

He signed up immediately.

"The reason I came into the industry," Bob said, "was because I actually saw his check and I knew he was lazier than me. I knew I didn't make

that much working 70-80 hours a week. I looked at it as a big step up and a way to make more money with less effort.”

“When I started doing the business, I really loved dealing with the people,” Bob said, “They weren’t all building houses, they had much more varied interests than windows and doors. It was a real relationship with them, instead of order taking, which was what I had in the building material industry.”

Bob out-earned Steve and went on to be one of the top 20 producers in that company. He quickly realized the freedom the money brought, being able to pick whom you work with and when you work— and the travel. He says it was, “just a complete lifestyle upgrade.”

Still, Bob was searching for the secret to success in the business. He asked one of his mentors, industry legend Jeff Roberti (who’s gone on to earn over \$70 million in his Network Marketing career). “What’s the big secret about making huge money?” Jeff said, “There is no big secret. You model the ones that are doing it. Wrap your personality around it after you learn the basic skill sets and the business systems. Then teach others to do the same— and *don’t change anything.*”

So that’s what Bob did.

Once he found someone who said, “I really want to build this, I’ve got 20 or more hours a week and I’m teachable. What do you want me to do?” Bob would put them into his strategic organizational development plan.

He would start by telling them, “Go out and bring people into your business: Recruit people for 30 days, full bore, full-blown, flat-out personal recruiting.”

Success is in the show.

“Your success is based upon how many people you show your product and your business to,” Bob says. “Not how many people you help building their group. It’s based on your personal income generating activities.”

“At the end of the first month, after you take all-out massive action, you pick your top producer. The best attitude, the most teachable, which,” Bob says, “is the number one key in the industry. You find the one that’s doing the most business.”

“There are two kinds of people,” Bob says, “those that make excuses and those that make money. The ones that are producing, and are the most teachable I invite into a mentor relationship for the second month. So, the first month they were recruiting and they’ve proven they know how.”

“The second month I’m going to have them repeat their activity. They’re going to take 80% of their time and they’re going to recruit just like they did the first month. But the 20% of their time that they’re not recruiting, I’m going to teach them to teach their number one person from last month how to recruit.”

“That person is going to duplicate momentum through the leverage of system-based leadership. Next month I’m going to teach them to teach their strongest; and the leader ranks begin to increase and group momentum begins. And then the person they were in mentorship with last month, who they taught to go out and teach to recruit; now I’m going to teach them to teach to recruit. I’m going to teach them about advanced event promotion, about developing cities, about developing geographic areas, maybe even international. I’m going to teach them about newsletters...”

“There are three different skill sets,” Bob says. “Getting started in building personal momentum, duplicating that momentum by taking a person that you’ve started in your business who’s proven themselves, that’s teachable, and teaching them to duplicate that skill set. Then you take the strongest person and teach them to duplicate that, to build a self-sustaining, self-motivating cash-flow organization.”

“It takes three generations of leaders to duplicate that,” Bob says. “And once they go through one cycle, that organization will make you money for the rest of your career in that company. Three months to build an organization that’s a stand-alone income generator. I would build however many organizations I needed based upon how much money each group’s momentum produced.”

“And that’s what I did and it worked perfect.”

According to Bob, what it takes to become super-successful in Network Marketing is consistency of income generating activities wrapped around a very simplistic strategy that works and that will duplicate.

“You can’t control people’s behavior,” he says, “but you can, through the sifting and sorting which happens when everyone enters a duplicative business process, find the ones who have the desire level and are teachable enough to follow the system.”

“Staying consistent and doing the job every day is really, really important. Two million dollars is earning 166 thousand per month, which is \$16,600 override on 10 key duplicating distributors. Finding the compensation plan to pay this type of override is the key,” Bob said. “The ideal plan should pay a predictable amount of money on each order to unlimited levels with minimal qualifications. Distributor friendly plans are a new concept, but they are evolving.”

“It’s not hard to make \$1 million.”

“First you have to earn \$10,000 utilizing a system that can duplicate: Establishing personal momentum. Then you expose that system to everyone and teach the producers who show up and start duplicating that system: Group momentum. Understand that the best picker wins. Then you teach them to teach and develop group momentum and your income will exponentially follow.

Then you do it again.”

“I figure no one’s getting out of here alive,” Bob says. “And when I get out of here I’m going to have the legacy of whomever I affected through my deeds and actions. I’m going to have the people who I know I helped. Network Marketing allows me to do that. I can go out and earn income and I can powerfully affect people.”

“Network Marketing is a contributory business model.”

“To be able to watch people change and to know, privately and personally and humbly, that your time and interaction may have had a directive hand in that it’s a reminder of the real rewards beyond the money; that you can contribute to people’s lives like that.”

“That’s what this business is all about,” Bob says. “The rest of it is just stuff. When you can affect people, and they you, and experience fellowship and good times during the building process, that’s when the real fun starts. That’s why I do all this. That’s what it’s all for.”

From [*The Greatest Networkers in the World*](#)



John Milton Fogg is an author, editor, speaker and coach. His books and audios have sold over three million copies worldwide.

He is the founder and former Editor-in-Chief of the highly regarded publication Upline®... was a Contributing Editor to SUCCESS magazine... the founder and former Editor-in-Chief of Network Marketing Lifestyles magazine... founding editor of Networking Times... the founder of GreatestNetworker .com... co-founder of TheNetworkMarketing Magazine.com and is the creative force behind TransformingMLM.com. You can connect with his writings on a regular basis at TheFoggBlog.com and learn more about what he is up to by going to <http://JohnMiltonFogg.com>

John is the author of the best-selling industry classic *The Greatest Networker in the World*, which has been read by more than two and a-half million people around the world and he has edited and contributed to far too many books to be mentioned here.

He has spoken around the globe, through out Canada and the United States, in Australia, China, Costa Rica, Crete, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russia, Singapore, Trinidad and the Ukraine.

John is married to Jekaterina (Katyusha), has a daughter Rachel 28, son Johnny 23, daughter Eleonora Milena (Ele) who's 7 and Anais Polina (his 'last child') was born in March, 2006.