

Lessons for Success

Q&A BLUEPRINT FOR BUSINESS

Business owner credits Sam Walton

What was your first job and how old were you?

My first job was actually working in my dad's newspaper pressroom. I was responsible for melting lead and pouring it into molds as well as helping run the press and help wherever I could.

I helped in my family business from age 10 till I got out of high school. I started my own vending machine company when I was 12, and it taught me the basics of business.

What lessons from your first job do you use in your current position?

There are three main lessons, the first being work ethic.

As a business owner, nobody writes you a paycheck, pays your insurance, contributes to your retirement, period. It is up to me to make it happen not only for me and my family, but for everyone else. When the rent is due and bills have to be paid, the only thing that we pay them with is our hard work and sweat equity.

Secondly, honesty. I saw lots of people do dishonest things in my dad's business as well as a kid growing up, knowing it was wrong.

If you can't be honest with yourself ... you will not be trustworthy to anyone.

And thirdly, my mom and dad really cared about our family. I never really understood Dad working 15-20 hours a day, but I do now.

What has been the biggest challenge of your career?

The biggest challenge has been coming from the corporate world after 27 years into the business owner role.

The day-to-day operation of any business is an awesome responsibility, but man is it fun.

How did you overcome it?

I really don't look at it as having to overcome anything. I see it as just learning new things about my business and about myself.

How did you become interested in the land market?

First of all, I grew up hunting and fishing from the time I was 4 or 5. I have always yearned to get back to the basics

of living, and that is the land and to be in the South, where I am from.

So after moving 23 times and living in nine different states, it was time to come back home.

When I decided to get into the real estate business, I knew from the first day that land was where I belonged and with my business and leadership abilities, it was where I could help my clients the most.

I look forward to meeting new people every day. Not only can I help them evaluate and sell their land, but the most fun of it is when all of that is over and we are friends. This is a great gig!

How has the economy affected land sales?

It's helped actually.

There is so much uncertainty in the air and a lack of confidence in government that people are putting their hard earned money into something that they know is safe — and land is the safest investment that there is ... just look under your feet.

If you don't own some of it, you had better start thinking about it.

How has your corporate experience helped you in real estate?

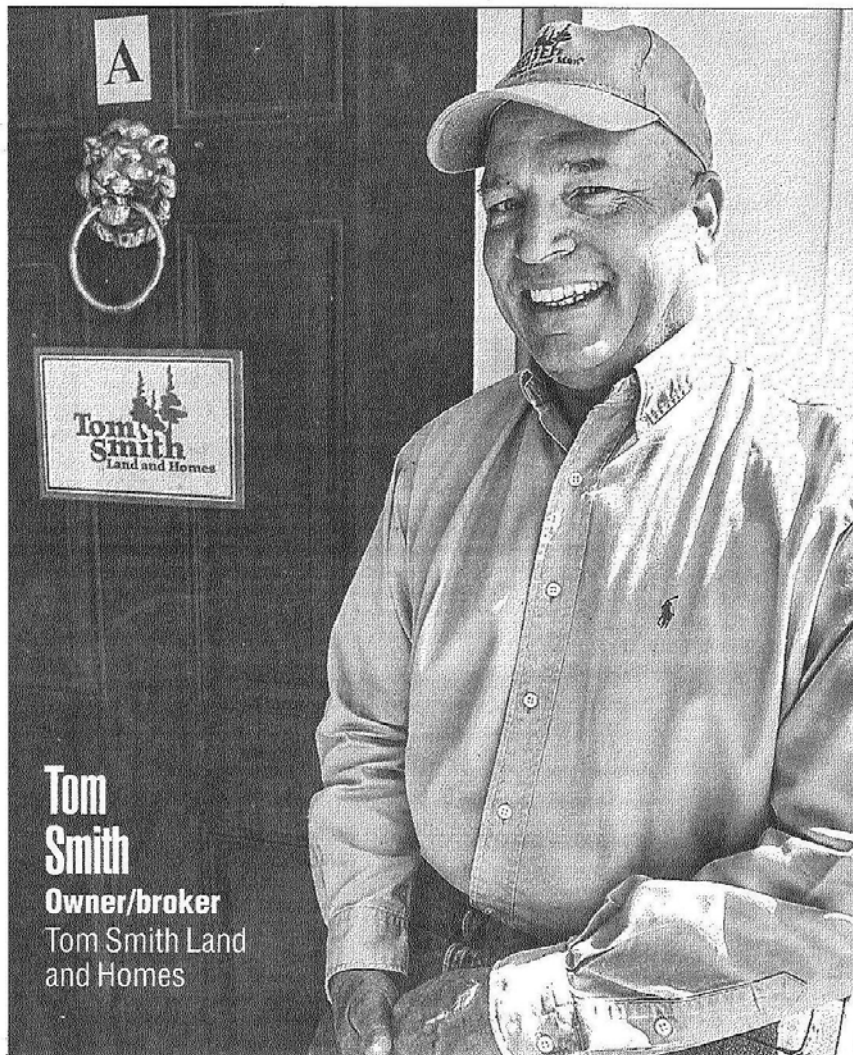
Unbelievably. The corporate world is all about execution, implementation and efficiency, which leads to profits. My experiences with Wal-Mart while Sam Walton was alive were the best. He taught me and all of those around him to treat folks with dignity and respect. He was truly a force in my life, and I miss him every day.

How do you balance family life and your career?

It's hard, but when you have all girls at home, they kind of make sure that you keep them happy. I do love to hunt and fish whenever I can get a chance!

What is the best career advice anyone has offered you?

Sam Walton once told me to trust everyone until they give you a reason not to. He was right. It really teaches you about your own as well as others' character as you move through this life!



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