



Jack Daly On... The Most Important 6 Inches: What Finishing 15 Ironman Competitions Teaches You About Business

Steve Sanduski:

Hello, everybody. Welcome back to another episode of On Your Mark, Get Set, Grow! Steve Sanduski here. I have with me today Jack Daly. Jack, you were a guest on the show earlier, and you did such a phenomenal job. We've got you back again, and we've got a new subject that we want to talk about here today. So, welcome back to the show.

Jack Daly:

I am excited to be here, Steve. The first time that I was invited was a real blast. The topic for today is one that I'm very passionate about. I think a lot of people will take a lot from this.

Steve Sanduski:

I agree. For those of you that may not have heard the first episode, just a real quick background here on Jack. He is a tremendous CEO and incredibly successful entrepreneur. You've also run and built six companies to national prominence, two of which you ended up selling to larger national companies, so you've got a tremendous business background. We're going to talk about that, but also something else that you do in your personal life is you are an incredible athlete. You have completed 15 Ironman Triathlons in 5 different continents. You've also completed 60 marathons in 33 different states. Over the course of all of that activity there, you've learned a lot of different lessons, and those lessons have helped you both on the physical side, but they also translate to the business side. That's really what we want to focus on here today, which is particularly with the Ironman. What are some of the lessons that you learned in preparing for the Ironman, and successfully completing those Ironman Triathlons? What are some of those lessons that you've learned that you're now translating into the work that you do on the business side?

Jack Daly:

Thanks for the intro. On October 12, 2013, I competed in Kona, finished Kona, and checked that one off my list. I stayed in Kona with friends and family for an extra week and just regaled in the fact that I had pulled this thing off.

As I sat on the beach, ruminating through the life that I've led in my business as well as in my sports, I came up with these seven lessons that I learned in the

Ironman journey that were very, very consistent with the lessons that I learned in being a serial entrepreneur having built a half a dozen businesses. The first of seven lessons that I underscore is important is you've got to have a vision. My vision in the Ironman was solid and clear. Ever since I saw that TV broadcast of Julie Moss legendary crawling across the last 50 yards to the finish line in Hawaii, coming in second, inspired the hell out of me. I just said, "My God, what human beings can accomplish if they just have a vision and out their mind to crossing the finish line!" Got started, "I'm going to be an Ironman." I wrote it down in my book bucket list, which is expensive, and I also share with people on my website at jackdaly.net in the tab called Life by Design. That is the first thing that I attribute to pulling off the Ironman, which is a clear vision. There wasn't a day that I woke up that I didn't visualize myself running down Ali'i drive in Kona, and hearing at the end Mike Riley call out my name, "Jack Daly, you are an Ironman."

I've got to tell you, I built six very fast-growing companies into national firms, and they were very fast-growing on the top and bottom line, but I never had a company that I couldn't paint the picture of what it was going to look like when it was finished. What dimensions it was going to have, what revenues it was going to have, what revenues it was going to have, where it was going to be conducting business, whether it was regional, or a state, or a continent, or worldwide. Who was probably going to buy it ... All of them I was building to sell them right from the start, how many sales people was I going to have, what was the margins going to look like, what are the revenues going to look like, what are the profits going to look like ... Very, very clear about what it looked like at the end state, and literally, I would have meetings when were just five people or ten people, and talking about our company as if it was 500 plus people, and pulling the rest of the organization along towards the vision.

Steve Sanduski: It's like that old saying that "All great things happen twice." Once in your mind, and a second time in reality. You had that clear picture from day one.

Jack Daly: Very clear. It's amazing when you have clarity of the vision, how in execution, you become so focused on what needs to be done, but even more important, what doesn't need to be done, and so get that extra stuff out of the vision.

Steve Sanduski: I think it's also important to mention that that vision has to be compelling. It can't just be about the money. We are all motivated by money to some extent, but there also has to be something else in there that's going to get you to persevere and push through during those inevitable difficult times when you're building a business, making sure that what you're doing is inspiring, is motivating, and that you understand what the why behind it. I think that's also important to mention.

Jack Daly: I say something that gets people inside the company and outside the company excited about what the company is venturing onto. The thing that I keep underscoring with people is this, that when you are an entrepreneur and you

put your career or your life at risk, you go into debt, you borrow from friends and family and investors, you put all of your capital into this venture, you are all in. There's no way to even take the risk to go all in as an entrepreneur if we didn't have that clear vision. That's what gets us excited, and that's what helps us get over the hurdles. Hurdles are going to be there in every, every endeavor. That, I believe, is what employees are looking for. I believe that none of us just wants to work for a pay check, that people actually want to be involved in something that's inspiring, that gets them excited, that they jump out of bed and say, "Hot damn! Let's go pull those off."

Steve Sanduski: Well said. How about number two, will be a second lesson here from the Ironman?

Jack Daly: I'm going to hurt all of my business listeners right now that are owner, entrepreneurs or CEOs, but here goes. Sports teams at every level in any sport are typically run better than most businesses. I don't care whether it's a high school team, a college team, or a professional team. I don't care if you play on a court, on a field, or on the ice. There isn't a coach out there in sports that would ever think about putting their players on the field without a playbook, without the systems and the processes that will enable that team to win more than they will lose. Yet, I go into companies, and I ask for the written systems in processes in playbook, and I play mostly, Steve, in the sales side of the world. I will say, "Where is your sales playbook?" They look at me as if I'm the man from Mars. No playbook. Each guy out there making up his own thing as they go along being the maverick of sales.

My largest sales force, Steve, was 2,600 sales people on the street. In that company, I was infamous for saying the following, "There aren't 2,600 best ways to sell this stuff, so let's figure out the best way and incorporate it into the playbook, and then train them in the playbook."

Steve Sanduski: It's like, why reinvent the wheel, if you know what works, if you know what those best practices are, if you know what the challenges are that your potential customers are facing, and you've got the product or service to solve it, why not discover what is the best way to get that message out, so that they understand it and they will get happily engaged with the product or service that you're offering.

Jack Daly: Without a question. How about this one? I'm hired about ten times a year to speak at Presidents' Clubs and the Chairman's Clubs, and I have repeat clients year after a year that I do this for. The frustrating thing is, the same sales people make the Presidents' Club year after year after year. They're competing in the same economy against the same competitors with the same product with the same price, so they must be doing something different. Figure out what that is, incorporate it in your playbook, and then get them out on the field with that playbook. By the way, remember where this conversation started. I'm on the beach after completing the Ironman in Kona, Hawaii, and I'm thinking about the

playbook that I used to do my first Ironman, the subsequent Ironmans and what enabled me to get to the Hawaii Ironman at the playbook. There isn't a person that takes on the Ironman 140.6 miles without a playbook. Get a playbook in your business. There's two keys to top sales people. One of them is grit, G-R-I-T. They won't stop no matter what. The second key ingredient is that they're maniacally focused on the key activities, which we could articulate as the playbook.

Steve Sanduski: Great. How about number three?

Jack Daly: Three, things that get measured get done. I really encourage the listeners to go to my website and check out my annual goals, but also check out my report that I gave to what I call the board of directors of my life. I have five people that meet with me individually four times a year and hold me accountable on my personal goals. That's 20 times a year. That means at least ones a month, every month, someone's holding my feet to the fire. When you look at what I measure, the degree of depth that I get and measure things in my personal goals, in my Ironman, in my marathons, in all of those endeavors, then what I do is I challenge my listeners to say this, can you imagine what I'm measuring in my businesses when I run my businesses?

I was schooled formally in college as an accountant. I was a CPA with Arthur Andersen before I went on my entrepreneurial quest. It was all about systems. It was all about measurement, and the audit. It's just following the process. When I was with Arthur Andersen, I would audit cash. I can remember 40 ... Some years later, as I'm talking to you today, that what we used was Form. It was the 47 different things that need to be measured to make sure that the cash was being handled appropriately inside the company. The more we measure in terms of the organization, the healthier that organization will be.

Steve Sanduski: Okay. Jack, I can just hear someone listening to this say, "Oh yeah, Steve was just saying the top sales guys and girls, they just got lucky." In your case Jack, you had a CPA mentality, so you're all about measuring things because of that. What about someone whose natural inclination is not to be measuring all these things. Do you have any thoughts for what they can do to ... I don't want to say force themselves, but what can they do to make sure that they have these measurements in place, even if that's not necessarily in their nature, so to speak?

Jack Daly: That's a great, great, great perceptive point. I would align myself internally with somebody that's naturally inclined to go there and be that at a senior level. There's someone in everyone's organization that's wired to kind of look at the data, and then report the data and analyze the data, but data helps us so much in terms of not what's happened, but what we need to be doing going forward. That's where we get our directional signals from, the go forward is from the data that we have from the past.

Steve Sanduski: Good. That just really gets back to another point, which we don't need to really get into today, but just quickly that, when you're hiring people, you don't want to hire people just like you, because you'll end with a whole bunch of clones running around, but you have to have those complementary people just like you're saying here. If you're not naturally inclined to be one who measures things and analyzes the data, then you're going to need someone on your team that can do that so that you can complement each other in those areas.

Jack Daly: Bingo.

Steve Sanduski: Okay. How about number four.

Jack Daly: I already alluded to and mentioned that I've got these five coaches that are calling me out and holding me accountable on my personal goals. That process, Steve, started at 13 years old. At 13, I interviewed, over the summer, 200 successful business people on how they got to be successful and what advice they would give a 13-year-old that had ambitions of being a successful business owner. They basically gave me the clue. The clue was, pick goals, write them down, not too many, share them with other people, and put a date on when you were going to get them done. That simple process, and then measure the activities that need to take place in order to get there. That simple advice. I sat down and put four goals in four dimensions of where I wanted to go in my life by the age of 30 when I was going to be really old, and that was financially, professionally, education, and family.

Then all I needed to do in today's terminology is reverse engineer. Begin with the end in mind and roll it back and figure out what I needed to do between 13 and 14, et cetera. That process started at 13. I'm 66 today, and I stayed for 50 plus years at that process has been working for me brilliantly, and I have these five adult coaches holding me accountable. I also have three coaches on my business, because there is no sense, as you said, to recreating the wheel. When I have my business and my business coaches around me, those guys are saying, "Gosh, have you thought about going this way? Have you thought about doing it differently in this way? What about that market, and how about this product?"

It's like light bulbs are going all over the room and there's opportunities. Then I get my business coaches to tell me, "Whoa, whoa, where are you going with that? I don't think that that's a good idea." Do I take all of the advice, if you will, that's so well intended from my coaches? No, but I put it in the barrel of things to say, "How do I look at my business?" and, "Can I look at it differently, because of the expertise that these people are bringing to the party?" On top of that, if I throw into the Ironman, I have six coaches on my triathlon sport. A swim coach, a bike coach, a run coach, an overall triathlon coach, a nutritionist coach, and a strength coach. If you add up the 6, the 5, and the 11, you are at something like 14 coaches that I'm leveraging in order to expedite my successful completion of whatever my vision is, whether it's the sport or the business.

Steve Sanduski: Jack, I'm listening to that and I'm thinking, "Men, 14 coaches!" How do you keep them all straight, and are you going to get conflicting advice, or what? As I'm processing that, I'm also realizing you're hugely successful. I'm sure a good amount of that success is due to the fact that you're getting some of the best people out there to give you that coaching advice, you're sifting through it, you're implementing the things that make the most sense for where you want to go with your goals.

Jack Daly: Yeah. Keep in mind, when you say "14," it sounds like the 14 are weighing in on everything in life. The swim coach is just to swim, and that's a minimal amount of time and he's not venturing into the other arenas. The bike coach is just to bike. My business guys are just on the business. My personal guys are on my personal life. There is a narrow dimension to where they're contributing, and there is a different amount of frequency with which I meet with them. My personal coaches, I'm meeting with four times a month ... Four times a year, rather, each. So, call it quarterly, and it's moving according to my travel schedule and theirs. So much of it can be done over the phone or Skype.

On the business side of the house, it's a less formal number of times, but that has to do with, Steve, where my business is today. I have built a quality of life business. I have no employees. I have no office space. I've been there, done that, and so I don't prioritize my business coaches as high as I do my personal life coaches, given the stage of life that I happen to be in right now.

Steve Sanduski: You're hiring expertise for each particular area and really leveraging that and getting the most out of that, so that makes good sense. How about number five?

Jack Daly: I'm going to go back to the sports analogy. There isn't a coach out there that would think about putting their players on the field without preparation, practice and training. I have a sales training company, and so I don't want this to sound self-serving, because I am telling you that it's insanity to put people out on the field or at their desk in the business endeavor without proper preparation. There is a direct connection between performance and preparation. One of the things that I have a passion for is golf. I've played over 85 of the top 100 golf courses. My goal is to play the top 100 golf courses.

When you look at the Pro Golf Tour, the people that are winning a higher percentage of their matches and the people that are winning the significant passes on the golf tour, actually play in less tournaments, and spend the majority of their time practicing. Take any discipline in life. Go to music, go to art, go to whatever you want it to be, and then look at the people that excel. What you will find is a person who practices more than they participate in that endeavor. So, why should we expect anything different from business? Take the time to practice. By the way, there is no way that you get to go to Kona or do an Ironman anywhere in the world without a high amount of practice, and I will tell you, it's somewhere between 15 to 20 hours a week for at least 4 to 6 months.

Steve Sanduski: That's great. Just like in sales, which is one of your specialty areas, a simple thing like role playing. Sales people should be role-playing different scenarios. Any thoughts on that?

Jack Daly: I don't even call it role-playing, I call it role practice, because people don't learn to get better by playing. They get better by practicing. Mark, Moses and I, we were partners with a company at one point, and it was an Inc. #10 company with 10,100% growth. He is a great, great friend, but one of the things that we said with our 120 sales people is that a minimum of one hour a day of training everyday, one hour of the day, would be training for every single individual. Three hours a week of that training was role practice.

Steve Sanduski: Very good. Excellent. We've got five now. Do you have a sixth one here?

Jack Daly: Yeah. We've got six and seven to go. Number six is this. It's a bit of a stretch on business for some people, but it shouldn't be. I'll do it on the Ironman first, and that is, fitness and nutrition. I burn somewhere between 12,000 to 14,000 calories on the Ironman day. Your body holds just shy of 3,000. If you don't replenish, and if you're not fit, you could die out there. I don't exaggerate with that. I happen to think doing an Ironman is easy compared to running a business, owning a business, and growing a business. The Ironman is a maximum of 17 hours. You start at 7:00 in the morning, you finish by midnight.

Let's say that the majority of them, which is true, finish. They give you a bid medal when you go around and you get to say things that people are really impressed with like, "I'm an Iron Man." I can tell you there isn't a business person listening to this broadcast that hasn't worked longer than 17 hours in a day, and nobody gave him a damn medal for it, but I can also tell you that I know that I can work longer hours, I can work smarter hours, and I can take rejection. That's what sales is about in particular as well as being a business entrepreneur. I can take disappointment, I can take failures, I can take mistakes, I can take rejection, I can take and deal with the negatives that come up in our business better, because I'm so physically fit. I know that that's the case.

Last year, my doctors all got together and studied anything and everything they could, and the assessment was that I'm the equivalent of a 37-year-old man. That's as of last year. Hopefully, I haven't deteriorated too badly. I have kids that are 36 and 44, and they hear that almost everyday from me. "I can kick your butt," and that is a great advantage to have. I say to the business entrepreneurs and owners listening here, "Take care of yourself." I ask my audiences this question, "How many of you have families?" Their hands are way high up. I say, "How many of you have kids?" Their hands are way high. You know what? Your families love you. They'd love to have you stick around a long time. Take care of yourself physically. Your business will be better as well as your home life.

Steve Sanduski: Yeah. I think it's so easy for entrepreneurs when things are difficult, that one of the first things they let slip is their health, their fitness. They start eating crappy,

because they feel like, "I've got so much work that I got to do. I'm so busy, I can't do this," but I think the reality is that if you ... Like you're saying, if you do take that time to exercise, you're going to end up feeling better, you're going to have more energy, it's going to release those endorphins, and you're going to have a better attitude, and you're going to be able to deal with those difficult times in a better way, if you are feeling healthy and you have that release of endorphins to get you feeling better. It's so easy to just let fall by the wayside, but absolutely critical throughout life to just make sure that you focus on that exercise and nutrition.

Jack Daly:

You know what? When I ask people, "Have you ever run before?" People get, "Yeah, I just don't like running," and I'll say, "How far have you ever gone?" Typically the answer is three miles. For those listening today, here is my advice. I hate the first three miles. I don't know many people that run that enjoy the first three miles. Almost every step of the first three miles, I want to turn around and go home, or go back where I started from, but I will tell you somewhere between three and five miles is when all of that starts to kick in, the endorphins are kicking in, and I can go from three to 15 miles, and not even know that I'm out there. I'm in a special state. I come back, it stays with me the rest of the day. It affects my attitude in a positive way.

I say this, if I exercise for an hour each day, I can work or be awake functionally two extra hours beyond that hour. Let me do it another way. If I don't exercise that hour, I lose two hours of effectiveness each day. The people that say, "I don't have the time to exercise," my attitude is, I don't have the time not to exercise, because I'm in that one to two hours a day after exercise.

Steve Sanduski:

I think that's a great example. I think it's so true. I found it as well ... I exercise a lot as well. I used to be a big runner back in the old college days and high school days, but now I'm into a lot of cycling with my bike. Got a beautiful place here to ride. That's good exercise for me as well, as some I'm lifting weights. Great. Understand fitness and nutrition. How about number seven, what's the final Ironman lesson?

Jack Daly:

The Ironman lesson number seven is the one that trumps everything else, and that is a 50% or more of success in any dimension in life is 6 inches, and that is the space between your ears. It is our attitude. I've actually gone on record with the world Ironman Corporation to say, "Instead of calling the Ironman 140.6, I think you should call it 140.6 plus 6 inches." 15 Ironmans, I can't remember a single Ironman where somewhere on the course I wanted to throw in the towel, where I wanted to give up.

I was doing Ironman Arizona. It's three loops on the bike about 37 miles a piece. At the end of the first loop, I heard the announcers say to the grand stand, "There goes Jack Daly, racing comfortably and fast in his age group." It was as if they put an engine on my bike when I passed. The next two loops, I encountered three punctures ... Three flats, and we carried two tubes typically

with us, and two tubes for three flats doesn't cut it. I fell so far back in the pack, and I had done a bunch of Ironmans before. I literally thought about just walking it in and calling it a day, but I don't have a quit gene in me. That's the type of thing that we encounter in every Ironman. That the dogs are biting at us and they are getting us down.

I think it's worse in business. Men, business is booming, and then all of a sudden, it goes into a crapper. Hiring people who are coming after you, and the quality of the people was terrific and then all of a sudden you start losing some good people and you are not being able to find the ones that you want. You've found the whole senior operational system, you've run the whole senior financial system, you lost big cut. The flats and punctures that occur in business all outnumber those that exist on the Ironman course. What I say is, if you can hold that head together, if you can have that positive energy ... You know what, let me put it in the context of the Ironman. I'm one of the oldest guys out there racing, and I just learned to swim eight years ago. When that gun goes off, I know I'm going to be one of the last guys out of the water.

There's 2,000 of them, and the bikes are there waiting for us when we get out of the swim. I know that the majority of the bikes are going to be gone when I get there. I said, "I can't go into that bike rack with a negative attitude, so come up with something positive." What I came up with was, I started to feel bad for the guy who came out of the water first, because think about how hard it would be for him to find his bike. Mine sits there all by itself, and it put a smile on my face. Then I started chin-scraping my helmet on, and realized that hardly anyone could pass me, because hardly anyone was going to be behind me.

I redid read the race mentally and said, "I'm only going to race one guy, whoever is in front of me, and I'm going to put him on the clock, and as soon as I pass him, I'll do it on another." So, I just did one guy at a time through the bike, but my specialty of the three sports is I'm a runner. I know that you get me past that cut off time on the swim and bike, I'm going pass people on the run. When I'm at 6:45 in the morning, treading water, getting ready for the gun to go off from the start of the swim of the Ironman, all I can think off is getting off of my bike and taking the whip after people.

I passed over 300 competitors in Ironman New Zealand on the run, because that's where I lived. Get what I just said, I implanted in my head before the undertaking of the race that exact scenario. I painted a picture of positive attitude to enable me to push through the flats and anything else that was going to get my way. The same can be said for business. We have to be so maniacally focused on the vision, and have an understanding that those goblins are going to come and come out of the woodwork on us, on our business, but because we have such a positive attitude, and we're resilient, and we've got grit, that we will win our medal in our business.

Steve Sanduski: In addition to winning that medal, your employees are going to take cues from you. If they see that you've got this attitude, it's going to also help them. It's just going to become contagious as well.

Jack Daly: It is absolutely contagious. It's the perfect description.

Steve Sanduski: Good. Let me just quickly go through these seven here that you talked about. Seven lessons from Ironman that entrepreneurs and CEOs can use in their business. Number one, start with a vision. Number two, develop a playbook. Number three, establish systems of measurement. Number four, get a coach, or in your case, get 14 coaches. Number five, practice and train. Train and practice. Number six, don't neglect your fitness and nutrition. Number seven, make sure you've got that great attitude. Does that sum up to seven here, Jack?

Jack Daly: You are right on target, Steve. Perfect.

Steve Sanduski: Jack, as always, this has been phenomenal. I appreciate it. I look forward to having you back on the show again real soon.

Jack Daly: Be awesome. Thanks again, Steve.

To inquire about our coaching services and programs, please call **1-866-622-9583**.

CEOCOACHINGInternational.com

