

CPA Australia Podcast

Transcript – Episode 66

- Intro: Hello, and welcome to the CPA Australia podcast, your weekly source for business, leadership and public practice accounting information.
- Jillian: Hello, everyone and welcome to another episode of the CPA Australia podcast. I'm your host, Jillian Bowen, and I head up the content and social media team, here at CPA Australia.
- Jillian: In today's episode, we are exploring the topic of success and the skills you need to make it happen with Gary Pittard, the author of *Why Winners Win*. Gary is the Managing Director of Pittard, Australia's leading real estate training and development organization. He has more than 30 years of experience with the best sales and leadership minds in the world, and he's a technology leader in real estate training. Gary, welcome to the CPA Australia podcast.
- Gary: Thanks for having me, Jill.
- Jillian: Now look, your book, *Why Winners Win* provides an insight into what it takes to be successful in business and in life. Now, there's a lot of information out there on that topic. So tell me, why is your book different?
- Gary: The book, *Why Winners Win*, is really about the journey of a lot of sales people. There's case histories, there's stories from my life in different industries, and that's what makes it a unique book.
- Jillian: Well, look, I've thoroughly enjoyed going through it and what I really liked is that before you really got into the process of starting to win, you actually started to look at why people fail. And I think that's a really great lesson that people can start with. And when I look through the book, you've identified four fatal flaws that are the main factors behind poor performance. Talk me through them in a bit more detail.
- Gary: Okay. There's low ego drive or low self-esteem. Now, ego drive was first ... well, I first read about it from authors, George Dudley and Shannon Goodson who wrote a book, *The Psychology of Sales Call Reluctance*, and what they define ego drive as was a love of persuading people. So it's interesting but self-esteem, I think is a very, very hard one to get over. We can get over it but we've got to work at it. And I think some of the things we've got to do, is we have to tell ourselves, "Well, if other people are succeeding, why not me?" I think we've also got to say, "Why can't I have the best things in life?" And I think these are the kind of things that we ... the kind of messages that we need to be putting into our minds because low self-esteem will bombard us with negative messages.

Jillian: Well, I think you make a really good point, is it sometimes feels like people don't want to stretch to the big dream because they're worried about what's going to happen if that doesn't come true.

Gary: Well, that's right. And of course they're afraid to put it on paper because you can fool a lot of people in life, but you can't fool that man or that woman that's looking back at you in the mirror every morning. You can't fool that person. And when you tell yourself you want to be successful and you define what success is, and you write it down and you're planning, well, you're going to know if you haven't done the actions necessary to follow that plan, if you haven't done the actions necessary to succeed. And so a lot of people don't do it, they don't want to put themselves in failure's way. And so they don't decide what success means to them and they don't start working toward it.

Gary: So yeah. I think we've got to start sending positive messages. Look, you switch on the television, you get negatives all the time, don't you? We hear about the situation in the U.S., the situation in North Korea, we hear about, in the real estate market, that the market might be cooling off, [inaudible 00:03:44] high net worth Chinese buyers are pulling out of the market. It's very easy to bombard ourselves with negative messages. Even if you're in accounting practice, it's easy to bombard ourselves with negatives. We think we're going to get that big client and then they end up going somewhere else, or we've got a good client and that client decides to go somewhere else. So we're getting negatives all the time. I think we get the negatives in life for free. I think we have to work towards the positives.

Jillian: I heard a really great saying the other day that the egg has to break before the bird can fly and I think that sums it up. That was really good. Sometimes we do hear the negatives and we tend to believe them a little bit too much. When you talk about that people can have too little belief in these things.

Gary: Well, yeah. I mean, there's little belief, is another one of the fatal flaws. People have little belief in themselves. They have little belief in their company. They have little belief in their leadership. They're having their little belief in their abilities to get the best out of life. And I think what happens is they get caught on this treadmill called life and eventually what they do is they go to work to pay their bills, and we always seem to manage to find the money to pay our bills. But then the bills get higher and higher because a lot of the times what they do is, "Oh, I'm burned out, I need a holiday." But they haven't saved any money because they've never taught themselves to save.

Gary: And so they go on a holiday on the credit card, and then for the next two or three years they're paying for that holiday that they put on the credit card, and they just kind of think that that's just the way life is, that it's all about going to work, paying your bills and looking forward to this period called retirement when life is miraculously going to change, little understanding that all of those bad habits that they've permeated throughout their life are just going to result in a pretty ordinary retirement as well. I just don't think that stopping work is the be all and end all to a happy life.

Jillian: Now look, the fourth of your fatal flaws, now, I don't work in sales and it sort of felt like sales when I first read it, but then it suddenly made sense to me, and that was call

reluctance, and I felt, well, I don't even like ringing up to get a pizza. My happiest moment was when I could start doing that via an app. So am I a classic case of call reluctance.

Gary: Well, yes. In one way, that's the case. I mean, we all do it from time to time. Have you ever had that difficult call you've had to make? It could be a family member that needs to have a bit of a talking to about how their behavior is affecting you. Or it could be an employee that needs to be called out on bad behavior. It could be a client, it could even be ourselves, and sometimes we don't want to have those tough conversations. But from a sales perspective, call reluctance can actually be described as the fear of self promotion.

Gary: I think call reluctance could very well be appropriate in the CPA arena too. You might have clients that suffer from call reluctance. So for example, they've got a client who really needs to have a good talking to, so for example, they could be behind with their tax. They could be totally irresponsible with their record keeping and virtually expecting their accountant to wave a magic wand and fix it with the tax department for them. And so, that client might need talking to, to say, "Look, you need to get your personal systems organized because it's costing you a lot of money in tax returns fines." It could be a difficult conversation to have and that person could get angry because they see that their accountant works for them and not the other way around. So we might have to have that conversation to say, "Well, look, you make it very difficult for me to help you in a professional manner. Perhaps we should call it quits and you should go and find another accountant." So that is a difficult conversation to have.

Gary: I remember, in the legal profession, when the legal profession was deregulated, I talked to a few solicitors because I was in real estate and so I had a lot of contact with them. But I said to them, "What are you going to do with deregulation?" And they said, "Well, we're not going to alter our fees. We're going to charge the fee that we've always charged, but we're just going to explain to people how our service is worth every penny that we charge." Well, that was okay except they never learned how to handle clients that rang up and said, "How much do you charge?" "Well, we charge the scheduled fee." "Okay, thank you very much." And then the client had hung up and go and try and find somebody that would do the job cheaper. They weren't trained to handle it.

Gary: So in any business that we're in, and certainly any business where we need members of the public to pay us money, we have to have no reluctance when it comes to promoting ourselves, no reluctance when it comes to having conversations with clients and saying, "Well, you should choose me as your accountant because this is what I will do for you." And so we see it with salespeople. They're afraid to prospect. They'll call it, oh, I'm lazy, or I'm not focused, or I get too busy, but really what it means is they're afraid to ring clients and look for business. They're afraid to self promote.

Jillian: Look, I feel a little bit better now because what you're describing there to me is good relationships and I'm quite happy to connect with people and talk to people. I'm just incredibly scared in ordering a pizza with the lot.

Gary: Well see, all of that's fine, Jill if you aren't employed to pick up the phone and order pizzas. It doesn't hurt anybody.

Jillian: You make a really interesting point. I have to tell you, just a couple of weeks ago, my accountant actually called me and she's a lovely lady, and I discovered this lady I've been working with for a number of years now had an English accent.

Gary: Yeah, yeah. It's interesting, isn't it? And I think when you see social media, social media is people are just texting backwards and forwards, just posting backwards and forwards to each other. There's now ... I was at the social media conference, Social Media Marketing World in San Diego last March and they're saying that now 65% of people have said that they would rather direct message a company than talk with them. And so, if they want to engage with us that way, that's fine, if they want to send us a message and get a response back. But sometimes I just think we have to remind ourselves that texts, emails, all these different things, just pick up the phone and have that human contact. Whether you're a CPA, whether you're a real estate sales person, whether you're in client coaching as I am, just pick up the phone and have a chat. It just reminds us that we're in the people business. We're all in the people business.

Jillian: It's great advice. I actually completely agree with you, Gary, and I think I'm actually going to make more of an effort to do it myself. It's very easy to fall for technology. It's great temptation to go for the easy road.

Jillian: Now, I am very anxious to get into our winning side of the equation, but I do want to just really quickly talk us through the deal breakers, those four fatal flaws, but there are other things that people need to be aware of. Can you just give me a quick list of things that are warning signs.

Gary: Excuses. I mean, that's probably the big one for me. You'll get people a little interview very, very well, but when they start with you, they'll start to come up with excuses why they can't do things that they actually agreed to do during the interview. So we see this all the time. You'll see people avoiding prospecting and they'll come up with all sorts of reasons why. Another one is what I call pretending to be busy, and it's PTBB. And so they'll be busy doing anything except the actions that they need to do to make them successful. So again, it all revolves around clients, having those conversations with clients either a self promotion call, or a call with a client to talk to them about how their property sale is going and making some recommendations that they know probably the client won't want to hear, but recommendations which the client really needs to hear. They'll avoid some of those kinds of things.

Gary: So for me, they sort of all add up. They probably are absorbed in low ego drive, wrong career selection, little belief, call reluctance, but sometimes people are just downright lazy. And also, they don't want to put themselves in any situation where they might fail. So they won't prospect because they think, "Oh well, I might get abused." And sometimes you do get abused because you've called somebody at the wrong time, but they won't do it. And so they avoid anything that's going to take them out of, and I don't really like the words, but take them out of their comfort zone. Well, you're not going to get successful by doing the same kind of stuff that you've always done, unless you are

already successful in which case, keep repeating it. But if you're not where you want to be, you have to change what you're doing. And I just find people tend to spend more time avoiding doing the work that they need to do, making the decisions they need to make. They spend more time avoiding it than just sucking it up and getting on and doing it, I think.

Jillian: Now look, we've talked about some of the reasons why people fail and I have to admit, as I said to you, that I can identify with at least one of them, maybe not in the extreme sense of that, but I think we can all see a little bit of that in ourselves at times and it's good to actually shine light on it. But let's turn things around now and let's talk about how to become winners, and according to you it starts with attitude. Tell me what that's about.

Gary: Yeah. We see this four major success ingredients, attitude, knowledge, skill and competent action, but attitude leads to all of the others. Attitude leads to-

Jillian: Well, that's personal accountability, isn't it?

Gary: Well, yes. Yes, it is. But you see, personal accountability, it's your attitude that will force you to look at yourself. It's your attitude that will force you to look at, okay, I'm in a job that I don't like. Well, why did I go into this job in the first place? Well, because I thought I'd like it. Did you like it in the early years? Well, yes, you did. Well, why don't you like it now? And it could be that the people are the same, the industry is exactly the same. It could be just our attitude has changed to a little bit jaded. We started to get into the same old routine and we just don't feel as good about it, and so we blame ... We don't look at ourselves and say, "My attitude is poor." We look at our industry and say, "Oh, it's got really tough now. The tax department is harder to deal with. The technology's harder to get our heads around. It's hard to find good support people."

Jillian: Into your second winning quality of knowledge, you really do talk about how important it is to have written goals.

Gary: Yeah, yeah. I mean, really, Jill, I say in Why Winners Win, no goals, no hope. And I put this to you, to your clients, where are you taking your business? What direction are you taking your company in? Now, if you'd mark time, you will eventually slide backwards because competitors will overtake you. Clients will die. You'll end up with a smaller client base or clients will move on. Clients will retire, they'll have less call for your services. So if we're not replacing those clients with new clients, then our businesses are going to slip backwards. So where are you taking your business?

Gary: Now, we know that in business, the leaders that do the best are the leaders that have an overarching vision. We hear about Steve Jobs, we hear about Bill Gates, you look at the more recently Elon Musk, these people are extremely motivated. And by the way, we tend to think, "Oh, they're brilliant, I'm not like them." But I tell you what, a lot of these people are just driven people who learn what they need to learn, who contact people and form networks of people that can help them get to where they want to go, and by the way, people that they can help in return. And so, they're just driven people

and they've learned what they need to learn. I mean, you look at Bill Gates for example, he takes say a week out every year and does nothing but read and study and think. And when you look at that, well, you'd think a lot of people know that, but how many actually do it?

Jillian: Well look, I am going to have to get into some very actionable results here and that is competent action. This is the part of your book that I have to say made me feel like I could actually start working on things. So let's talk about some of those winning habits that people can develop.

Gary: Well, it actually ties in to your previous question. You mentioned attitude and we talked about some of the steps people need to do in order to be successful, and we started we touched on goals, we then talked about planning, and then we mentioned some of the negative things like poor time management, minimum effort and not understanding their industry, not understanding the training that they're doing, erratic focus and not conscientious. Now, those negative things can actually be rectified by starting off with a good attitude, I want to be the best I possibly can be. I am going to pursue excellence, okay? So that kind of attitude. And then a little bit of resilience is important. Life is going to serve up some challenges to us. The resilience to just keep going forward, yup, okay. This didn't work the way I wanted it to work, but okay, what could I have done better? What could I improve upon? And then get back into it. Don't be discouraged, just keep going, keep going. So that's resilience. Then there's other things.

Gary: So it brings us back to goals, having clear written goals. Where am I taking my company? What do I want my career to give me in both business professional sense, and what am I going to do with the income I earn from my profession so that I can build a better life for myself and for my family? Then what we have to do is we have to plan that. So we look at what do we need to produce in order to manifest this kind of life for ourselves? Now, we could be talking about a picture that's 20 years into the future. And when I first started setting goals, my plans were a 20 year big picture, but then we got to break it down into what do I have to do this year? What do I have to do this quarter? What do I have to do this month? What do I have to do each day? And we've got to break it down into actionable steps, or things that we're going to do on a daily basis.

Gary: And then we might find other things such as distractions. Because when we're working towards goals, distractions always get in the way, and this is where time management becomes important. I was a poor time manager. I became a pretty good time manager by studying time management, looking at my areas of weakness, putting in place personal scheduling devices such as a diary and then religiously working out of that diary. Different tools would help me with improving my time management and I've been tweaking those systems over the last 20 years.

Gary: So again, whatever skills you need to learn, the right attitude will first of all send you in the direction of where can I develop those skills. Because let's face it, skills are actually knowledge plus practice that equal skills. So for example, on your website, on the CPA website, you've got some great resources for your members. Now, there are a whole lot of people that absolutely devour those resources. There are some people that never look at them. Now, what would you rather have? Would you rather have an accountant

that did accountancy in 1960 and then became a CPA, and then has never done anything since? Or would you rather have an accountant that is abreast of the latest changes in regulation, that has studied other courses perhaps how to deal with people, that's actually studied and learned and grown in his or her profession? I mean, what would you rather? Somebody that's getting better or somebody that's just marking time?

Jillian: I think that's an easy one for all of us. We know that what we want is someone who's getting better. The challenge as you say is developing that attitude yourself. So it's so important to always be looking at your own attitude in that space. Do unto others as you would have done to yourself.

Gary: Exactly. It's interesting, I looked at my goals recently. I looked at them from goals that I'd set 25 years ago, and I set them as a person that was just past 30 and I set them for 20 years into the future. And I looked at those goals 20 years later, and I looked at them I thought, how little I knew of myself back in those days. For example, and this is true, if your members don't believe me, I am happy to scan and email them the page, but I decided that I need a respectable qualification back in those days. And so I decided that ... This is right in the earliest days of my sales career. I decided that I would probably need to be ... I'd probably need a respectable university qualification. So I thought, right, I'll do accounting because that will teach me everything I need to know about business management as well.

Gary: Now, of course what I didn't think about is that numbers really aren't my go. I've got a great financial controller, Ian Oldershaw. He is a CPA. And I've got a great accountant who ... I'm based in Sydney, my accountant's based in Brisbane, but, I just think so much of this person and his company that I'm willing to travel when I need to in order to sit and chat. So I have got really good financial advice, but they tell me what I need to know, they answer all my questions, and I make decisions based on that. I realized that accounting was not my thing. I would have been a dreadful accountant. And I looked at those goals 20 years later and I realized that if I'd actually achieved what I'd set that paper 20 years ago, if I'd actually achieved that, I would have sold myself and my family short. We're actually better off having learned all those lessons. So there you go.

Jillian: Gary Pittard, thank you for joining us today, for your insights into the sources of failure and success, and of course, the winning qualities necessary to achieve that success in both business and life. There are lots of actions our listeners can take from what you shared today. But to find out more about how they can develop their attitude, knowledge, skill and competent action as part of their roadmap to success, it's all covered in detail in your book, *Why Winners Win*. Now, that's available now at all good booksellers, and of course we'll add a link to it in our show notes. Gary, thank you again for your time today. It's been such a pleasure talking with you. If you'd like to download the transcript for this episode and access further resources, go to cpaustralia.com.au/podcast/66. Make sure you never miss an episode of the CPA Australia podcast by subscribing on iTunes or Stitcher. Until next time, thanks for tuning in.

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