



# MAKE THE MAGIC HAPPEN

How to be the heart and soul of your company without losing your heart and soul BY: DOUG CAIN

I was thinking the other week about the time, effort and labor of love that is my stewardship of my 64-year-old company, Lake Truck Lines. Then I started thinking about what it has cost me ... When you start a little company (I started with one junk truck when I restarted the company in 1983), you live, eat, breathe and love on your baby ... to the point that you exclude many of the people and organizations you also have in your life. That was me. That was my story.

Church meetings are skipped, birthdays are missed and vacations are postponed (indefinitely, I might add). Your relationships are short-changed; each interaction is weakened because you are "not really there." Most importantly, your relationship with yourself is compromised. At that point, you start "losing your heart and soul."

But many of the items listed can be rectified – maybe not perfectly, but progress can be made. Some things, however (like time), are irreplaceable. So the real question becomes one of balance. How can Douglas Cain be the heart and soul of Lake Truck Lines without losing

his heart and soul in the process?

First off, as with all things, you must make a commitment. Commit to finding the right balance. Just as you must commit to that little baby who is your son or daughter, you must commit the appropriate amount of time to your other child. You can never do something for one child that would bring harm to another. I call this my Fourth Child Analogy.

I have a dear friend who spends so much money and time on his three children that he has little operating capital and time for his small company – his fourth child. Now, this seems backwards to my problem, which is why it was so obvious to me. All relationships and assets must be kept in balance. If they aren't, someone will get shortchanged, and in the end, it is always you.

I am in the oilfield business. When you are in the oilfield business, it basically means you really do work 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For 27 years, I took as many phone calls at 2 a.m. as I did at 2 p.m., Dec. 25 was the same as March 25 and Sunday was the same as Wednesday. What happened was that I never shut down my brain, liter-

ally. My life was a series of catnaps.

So you need to shut everything down and just be still. Shut down the stimulus. Be still and just breathe – even if it is just for a few minutes at a time, a couple of times a day. Turn off the phone (don't put it on vibrate), turn off the lights, kick off the shoes and enjoy a few minutes of nothing. Trust me, it is harder than it sounds.

When you are running everything, you are stuck in that side of your

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brain. Start working out the other side of your brain. Just like I would not workout only my right arm or leg, I force myself to do things that make the other side of my brain work. If you don't read, then read (you need to read four to six books a year). If you read spy novels, read a presidential autobiography instead. Paint, do woodwork, plant a garden – do something that activates the other side of your brain.

You not only should do something that is outside the norm, but you occasionally need to do those things that are uncomfortable. Getting out of your comfort zone is another benefit of shaking things up. Those of you in sales know all about getting out of your comfort zone. That's where all the good stuff happens. When you are asked to do something creative, like writing this column (when there is not a creative bone in this old body), that is when the real nuggets come out – when the real lessons are learned.

Peter Braeuler of Renaissance Forums is completely remaking Lake Truck Lines, and he works with our executive staff and asks the same question eight to 10 times. We find that when we are outside of our comfort zone and getting frustrated, the really good answers come out. The first couple of answers are easy, but that last one or two answers? Those are the ones that change lives.

Finally, talk to someone. When that mouse is running on that wheel inside your head, it can be a challenge to open up, but please do. My bride, Lisa, listens to me and guides me. My executive assistant, Caryn Kelly, plans my life and calms me down. Braeuler always asks the right questions when I am frustrated and helps me clear my head.

Find that person or those people to open up to and be totally unguarded and honest. That is when you will find out what your real concerns are and when the real answers will begin to come out.

I'm still working these suggestions out in my life; sometimes they work and sometimes it takes time to see the results. But keeping it simple and being consistent are the keys to seeing the results you want ... and the results your company needs.

You can be the heart and soul of your company without losing your heart and soul. Just set your boundaries, be still, workout the other side of your brain, talk to someone and watch the magic happen. Until next time ...

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## A PORTRAIT OF HOPE

Douglas Sterling Cain's journey to the top

With honor and integrity as his foothold, Douglas Sterling Cain has climbed a mountain. The payoff for devotion, sacrifice and round-the-clock work has yielded 300 percent growth in his company, Lake Truck Lines, over the past two years.

Lake Truck Lines' humble beginnings are rooted in Houston, formed in 1949 by Cain's father. Eventually, with his father's retirement and the decision to purchase the company in 1983, Cain began his climb.

He links the company's recent growth and success to a decision to move the headquarters from Houston to San Antonio, believing it all happened by "grand design." The company arrived in San Antonio with 12 trucks, and it is now operating close to 100, quickly becoming the solution for custom oilfield equipment and tank manufacturing, as well as oilfield transportation and logistics.

Cain prides himself on being innovative and "staying ahead of the curve." His employees are encouraged to be perceptive as to what kind of equipment will make oilfield jobs safer and more effective. Out of this desire, subsidiary company Lake Oilfield Services was born. This new baby already manufactures six different types of equipment used in the oilfield. Projections are to expand the line to nine types by the end of 2013.

Cain's intention is to be part of the solution – to help the economic surge that has occurred in rural towns due to the oil boom, to gain momentum and to have "staying power." As Cain sums up in his own words, "honor and integrity are incredibly expensive on Monday, but the dividends show up on Friday."

Cain, indeed, has an eagle eye view from the mountain he has climbed. Each decision has enabled him to ascend the steep slope, relying on honor and integrity to get him to the top.

As an authority on transportation oilfield logistics and issues pertaining to the fracking process, Doug S. Cain is a published author, speaker and radio/TV personality. To book him for an interview or speaking engagement, contact Alice Guerra at [alice@goadv.com](mailto:alice@goadv.com) or 210-379-4283, or Mark Trevino at [mark@goadv.com](mailto:mark@goadv.com) or 210-870-8730.

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