



Dick Kaplan

President and CEO of Pictometry

*"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence...
Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent."
Calvin Coolidge*

Dick Kaplan's turning point is one that taught him one of the values most fundamental to his later rise to success. While he was in grade school, Dick had something of a troubled time of it. He was held back twice and kicked out of high school no less than three times. When he actually did achieve some kind of good result, and got the highest score on his regent's test for elementary algebra, he was simply accused of cheating and forced to take it over again. Clearly, at that point in time, his reputation and self esteem weren't so great. In fact, the only thing that kept Dick going through these struggles was a distant memory of a family gathering at which his uncle, Dr. Elmer Milch, had turned to face him in front of the whole family and pronounced that Dick would be "the star of the family". Whenever he felt like giving up, he would remember this prophecy and renew his determination to fulfill it.

Despite his troublesome early days, Dick did manage to get into Monroe Community College, and he studied there for a short while before transferring to the University of Buffalo. However, one day he received some shattering news. Back home his 29 year old brother, who helped their father run the family carpeting business, had died after a long bout with cancer. Dick's father and mother were devastated and began to withdraw into themselves, ignoring the family business. Within just a short amount of time the business

was in serious trouble, and desperate to help out his family, Dick quit the University of Buffalo in order to return home and tend to matters personally. Though he had worked hard to get into college and had made it despite the naysaying of many others, Dick nevertheless felt obligated to return and help his ailing parents and their business. As a result, his academic career was cut short.

When he got home, Dick found that the situation was actually somewhat more dire than he had originally imagined. His father had often sunk his own money into the company to take care of expenses as they arose and to keep the customers happy. His father therefore had little savings to take care of things when the company suddenly found itself in debt after the death of Dick's brother.

Knowing he would need a bank loan to save the family business, Dick went to their bank to borrow money and rebuild the business. There, he met with a loan officer who, without even knowing it, taught him a very important lesson. "There's no way I can loan you this money with the business in the state it's in," the lender told Dick. For a moment, it seemed as if his hopes were crushed. But then the lender followed up with something unexpected. "However," he went on, "I'm going to lend you the money because I know your father. If you're anything like him, I know I'm not going to regret it."

Dick thought of his father's commitment to customer satisfaction, and he now saw that both this and his father's reputation were the critical instruments for getting the business back on its feet. Reputation, he learned, was everything in business.

Having received the loan on the good faith of the lender, Dick worked at his father's business and helped to turn things around. Drawing on the support of the company's long-standing customer base, Dick continued to realize the positive

impression that his father's reputation had had upon these people and vowed to live up to it.

Apart from the lessons he learned about reputation, however, there were many other methods that Dick undertook to make himself a more effective businessman. To begin with, he took to heart the advice given by a successful businessman he knew by the name of Harry Mangurian Jr., whose philosophy was that if you wanted to become a truly successful businessman, you needed to learn to promote your products and to get your name out there rather than waiting for others to come in the door. Dick integrated this into his approach at running the family business, and as a result he was quickly able to pay back the loan and get the business back in the black again. Having done so, he helped his father into retirement and took over most matters on his own.

Equally influential was the advice of his friend Chuck Mills, who told Dick: **"If you're going to work, do something with a huge potential."** Though others had seen the carpet business as something limited, Dick knew otherwise. Eventually, Dick saw an opportunity to seize on the true potential of the industry, and founded a company called the Maxin Group. The Maxin Group was a collection of Dick's businesses that were each involved in different aspects of the carpet industry, such that the whole formed an entirely cohesive combine. Dick did very well for himself by starting this group which eventually became a public company on the New York Stock Exchange.

After a time, Dick left the company thinking he was retired from a business career, and he did some ventures such as writing a book and running for US Congress - which he lost. Dick was eventually asked by some investors in the company Pictometry to come in and turn their operations around. Much like his taking over the family carpet business, and his experience with the Maxin Group, this also proved to be an incredibly successful venture for Dick.

Having achieved substantial success for himself, Dick continues to find ways to give back to the community. At present, he is working on an updated edition of his book

called "Time for Caring". When asked to indicate the core principle of the belief system that has brought him so far, Dick doesn't run short on wisdom:

"In each life there is a time to give and a time to receive...Only when there is a true joy in giving and dignity in receiving can human spirits be uplifted and the C.A.R.I.N.G. cycle be completed."

Coming from someone who made great changes in his own life and ultimately arrived at such success, the words have a ring of truth that is hard to come by.