

David Summers, author of the recently published “Keys to Success” is being interviewed about his book on influential business people.

David Summers = DS

Interviewer: So what is it that makes a businessman or business woman influential?

DS: Well, first we ought to think about what we mean by influential. Lots of business people enjoy success but relatively few become influential, *really* have an influence, on the people around them, on society, on the world -

Interviewer. Ok, so who would you say were influential? What names come to mind?

DS. Well, sometimes it isn't the names that come to mind, sometimes it's the product. Obviously we've got the big names - Bill Gates, Henry Ford, people like that. Sometimes the names are not familiar at all - like Sam Walton.

Interviewer: Sam who?

DS: Exactly! (*both laugh*) Sam Walton was the man who perfected the idea of the discount store. The Wal-Mart stores are his. It's the biggest chain of retailers in the world and in the States Wal-Mart employs more than 1.3 million people.

Interviewer: Wow! He's a rich man!

DS: He *was*. He died in 1992, but yes, his heirs are worth more than \$100 billion - that's more than Bill Gates. If he was alive today he'd probably be the richest man in the world.

Interviewer: So, he invented the discount store.

DS: Ah no - and that's another point he didn't *invent* the discount store, he just *perfected* it. Sometimes a great idea is already out there, and it takes a great mind to see the potential and to turn the idea around. Other successful business people take an idea that's already a success and just change the context.

Interviewer: I'm not sure that I follow you -

DS: Well, earlier we mentioned Henry Ford. He invented the assembly line. He used it to produce cars.

Interviewer: Yes?

DS: Well, Ray Kroc -

Interviewer: Ah, the McDonalds guy!

DS: Yes, well, what he did was to take Ford's idea of the assembly line - and bring it into the kitchen. The initial idea was there - he just *adapted* it.

Interviewer: So, let's go back to my original question: what sets these people apart from ordinary business people? What make them so *influential*?

DS: Well, I suppose there are a number of factors. First of all there is an element of luck.

Interviewer: Being in the right place at the right time?

DS: Yes, but obviously that's not enough in itself. You have to be able to see a gap in the market. Sometimes a certain amount of business training or experience is necessary for that.

Interviewer: Ok, so we're talking about an idea, having an idea that would fill a gap.

DS: Yes. For an idea to be successful, you have to do a lot of forward planning, a lot of thinking. Sometimes these great business people have an idea for years and years, decades even, before it's actually put into action.

Interviewer: Ok, what else? What other things are necessary?

DS: Well, great business people have to be prepared to take big risks.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

DS: Well, for every great idea that works, there are probably hundreds - or thousands - that don't. You have to be prepared to deal with failures as well as successes.

Interviewer: And I suppose that implies having a certain amount of money at your disposal.

DS: Yes, business people will need to invest both time and money.

Interviewer: So does that mean that all influential business people are also rich?

DS: No, that doesn't necessarily follow. If you've got a really good business plan and a firm idea of how to make it work, then you stand a chance of convincing others to invest in you. So, I suppose we could say that having a convincing nature is also a requirement.

Interviewer: The gift of the gab?

DS: *(laughing)* Indeed! The gift of the gab! *(both laugh and fade out)*