

IT TAKES CHAMPAGNE

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BY JOHN GUY

THIS IS NOT A PAPER ABOUT MUSIC, THOUGH
MUSIC THERE BE.

THIS IS NOT A PAPER ABOUT TELEVISION, THOUGH
TELEVISION PERTAINS.

THIS IS A PAPER ABOUT BUSINESS, ABOUT KEEPING PEOPLE TOGETHER,
ABOUT MAINTAINING FUNCTION AND REPUTATION DURING LIFE AND
AFTER DEATH. IT IS ABOUT THE BUSINESS OF CREATING A LEGACY.

AND

THIS IS ABOUT LEADERSHIP.

MALCOLM FORBES AND WARREN BUFFETT AFFIRMED THE BELIEF OF WILLIAM SAMUEL JOHNSON: "**He knows not his own strength who hath not met adversity.**" FORBES AND BUFFETT BOTH SHARED THAT RARELY HAD THEY MET AN EFFECTIVE LEADER WHO, AT SOME POINT IN HIS LIFE, HAD NOT OVERCOME A PERSONAL CHALLENGE.

BORN IN 1903 IN STRASBURG, NORTH DAKOTA, IN A SOD HOUSE, NO PHONE OR ELECTRICITY, NO PLUMBING, OUR SUBJECT ROSE ABOVE NOT-UNCOMMON ABSENCES OF MUSIC EDUCATION, BUSINESS EDUCATION, AND EXPERIENCES IN THE THEATRE, AND HE LARGELY OVERCAME HIS GREATEST EMBARRASSMENT: HIS INABILITY TO SPEAK ROUTINE ENGLISH. ALTHOUGH BORN AND RAISED IN THE UNITED STATES, HE DID NOT START TO SPEAK THE LANGUAGE UNTIL AT LEAST AGE 21. WE MUST ADD TO THE LIST OF CRITICAL HAPPENINGS HIS NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE IN HIS ELEVENTH YEAR WHEN HIS APPENDIX RUPTURED. SEVEN WEEKS LATER HE WENT HOME WITH A DRAIN, AND A ONE-YEAR CONVOLESENCE. HE COULD NOT WORK, BUT HE COULD PLAY THE ACCORDION, BEHIND THE BARN, AND HE COULD IMAGINE HIMSELF MAKING OTHERS HAPPY WITH MUSIC.

NOW, WITHOUT REVEALING A NAME, HOW MANY IN THIS AUDIENCE KNOW ABOUT WHOM WE ARE SPEAKING?

AND WE ARE LOOSELY CONNECTED.

LAWRENCE WELK HAS A NOTABLE CONNECTION TO INDIANA. HE MADE HIS FIRST RECORDINGS IN **RICHMOND, INDIANA**, FOR THE **GENNETT RECORDS LABEL** IN 1928. THIS EARLY RECORDING EXPERIENCE HELPED LAUNCH HIS CAREER IN MUSIC. THERE'S EVEN A HISTORICAL MARKER IN RICHMOND COMMEMORATING HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MUSIC INDUSTRY. IT CAN BE REACHED FROM SOUTH 1ST STREET, 1/4 MILE SOUTH OF SOUTH A STREET (U.S. 40). THE RECORD, FOR WHICH LAWRENCE PAID \$400, HAD "SPIKED BEER" ON ONE SIDE, "SHANGHAI HONEYMOON" ON THE OTHER.

OTHER CONNECTIONS. THE LAST LIVE CONCERT OF HIS LIFE TOOK PLACE ON SEPTEMBER 16, 1983, AT THE STAR PLAZA IN MERRILLVILLE.

AND AT LEAST ONE MUSICIAN. JACK IMEL, FROM PORTLAND, INDIANA, WHO WAS STUDYING AT ARTHUR JORDAN CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC IN INDIANAPOLIS, MADE A HIT IN JANUARY, 1957, WHILE COMPETING ON "TOP TUNES AND NEW TALENT," A LAWRENCE WELK PRODUCTION, AND HE WENT ON TO BE A PERCUSSIONIST FOR LAWRENCE WHILE OCCASSIONALLY DANCING.

LAWRENCE PERFORMED A SPECIAL EPISODE OF **THE LAWRENCE WELK SHOW** THAT WAS A TRIBUTE TO THE INDIANAPOLIS 500. THIS EPISODE FIRST AIRED ON **MAY 25, 1968**. OF

COURSE, IT STARTS WITH BACK HOME AGAIN AND
A TAP DANCE ROUTINE.

HOW DID LAWRENCE WELK BECOME AN ENDURING PART OF
OUR LIVES, AND OF THE LIVES OF SCORES OF SUPERB
PERFORMERS? HOW IS IT THAT THIS MAN, UNIQUE AMONG
ENTERTAINERS, STARTING IN 1951, CONTINUES TO THIS DAY, ON
WEEKLY TELEVISION, ALMOST 75 YEARS? HAVE OTHERS DONE
THE SAME? NONE THAT I CAN THINK OF. AND HOW ABOUT IN
BUSINESS? MAYBE RAY CROC? WITH EFFORT, SOME OF YOU
PROBABLY CAN THINK OF ONE OR TWO, BUT, IN TRUTH, IT IS
MUCH EASIER TO FIND ORGANIZATIONS WITH BUSINESS
MODELS THAT HAVE NOT SURVIVED THE TEST OF TIME. MR.
WELK'S MODEL SURVIVES THAT TEST.

HIS FAMILY UNDERSTOOD THAT LAWRENCE WAS NOT TO
BE A FARMER, AND FOUR YEARS BEFORE EMANCIPATION,
HE MADE A DEAL WITH HIS FATHER. HE WOULD WORK
FOUR YEARS, GIVING EVERY PENNY TO HIS FAMILY OF HIS
OUTSIDE EARNINGS IN EXCHANGE FOR A \$400 ACCORDION.
(AROUND \$6,000 TODAY.)

HE LEFT HOME ON HIS 21ST BIRTHDAY, 1924, PLAYING THE ACCORDION HERE AND THERE, UNTIL, IN 1925, HE MET LINCOLN BOULDS, A MAN WHO WAS TO INITIATE LAWRENCE'S REAL EDUCATION IN BUSINESS AND MUSIC IN A SAD WAY, BUT AN IMPORTANT WAY. THE RELATIONSHIP ENDED WITH BOULD'S ALCOHOLISM. THE LESSON, OF COURSE, WAS THE POWER OF ALCOHOL.

FORTUITOUSLY, ANOTHER MENTOR APPEARS, GEORGE T KELLY, WITH WHOM HE WORKED FROM 1925 TO 1927. THIS OLD IRISHMAN TOLD LAWRENCE NOT TO PUT ON AIRS AFTER MAKING SOME MONEY, NEVER TRY TO BE SOMETHING YOU ARE NOT, IF YOU DON'T LIKE SOMETHING, DO NOT COMPLAIN, ESPECIALLY IF YOU CANNOT DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT, BUT ONE THING GEORGE DID NOT TEACH LAWRENCE WAS HOW TO READ MUSIC BECAUSE, OF COURSE, GEORGE THOUGHT LAWRENCE COULD. NOPE. THE SHEET MUSIC WAS THERE FOR SHOW.

MEANWHILE, MRS. ALMA KELLY WAS HELPING LAWRENCE TO LEARN ENGLISH JUST BY ANSWERING QUESTIONS

MOSTLY ABOUT LAWRENCE ISMS. HERE ARE TWO
LAWRENCE ISMS: “SO YOU HAVE ACUTE INDIGESTION?
WHAT IS CUTE ABOUT INDIGESTION?” AND HIS
COMPLIMENT TO A WOMAN: “YOU APPALL TO ME.”

THEN HE STARTED A BAND THAT GAINED POPULARITY
AND A GIG WITH WNAX RADIO, 1927, WITH A SHOW NAMED
“LAWRENCE WELK AND HIS HOTSY TOTSY BOYS—THE
BIGGEST LITTLE BAND IN AMERICA.” THEY WORKED WELL
TOGETHER FOR SIX YEARS UNTIL, ONE DAY, A MEMBER OF
THE BAND SAID ‘YOU BOUNCE AROUND LIKE YOU ARE AT
A BARN DANCE, AND YOU CANNOT EVEN SPEAK ENGLISH.
FOR THESE REASONS WE ARE LEAVING IS YOU.’ ANOTHER
LOW POINT, REQUIRING RECOVERY.

LIKE SO MANY ICONIC AND SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURS,
THE LAWRENCE WELK STORY IS FILLED WITH CRISES
FOLLOWED BY SUCCESS. ONE EXAMPLE IS THE AWFUL
LIVING CONDITIONS AND LOW INCOME, WITH HIS NEW
WIFE, ON WABASH IN CHICAGO, BUT MY FAVORITE IS THE
STORY OF PHOENIX, A JOB OFFERING PLENTY OF INCOME,
\$425 A WEEK, AT THE MIRADOR BALLROOM. THAT IS

UNTIL THE BAND ARRIVED IN THREE CARS TO FIND THE FACILITY CLOSED. A DIAMOND RING HE HAD ACQUIRED AFTER A SUCCESSFUL RUN WAS THE POSSIBLE ANSWER, BUT HE LOST IT WHILE SWIMMING, UNTIL HE FOUND IT LATER, PAWNING IT FOR \$75. THAT GAVE HIM ENOUGH BREATHING ROOM TO SPEAK TO THE 22 SHAREHOLDERS OF THE MIRADOR, CONVINCING THEM TO OPEN BY SAYING HE WOULD ABSORB ANY DEBT ARISING FROM LOSS. THE ENSUING WEEKS OF CROWDS GENERATED ENOUGH CASH TO LIVE ON AND TO RETRIEVE THE RING WHICH HE WORE ON HIS LEFT HAND THROUGH MOST OF THE LATER YEARS ON TELEVISION.

HE DID HAVE AN EYE—FOR BUSINESS DEALS. ONE WAS A HOTEL IN DALLAS, “THE MAIN PEAK,” WHICH QUICKLY BECAME THE LAWRENCE. THIS WAS A SIX-MONTH EFFORT FEATURING AN ATTEMPTED SUICIDE AND A BOOTLEGGER. OTHER ATTEMPTED BUSINESSES WERE AN ELECTRICAL STORE IN YANKTON, CHICKEN FARMING IN OMAHA, A RESTAURANT IN MASON CITY, AND A DISTRIBUTOR OF CHEWING GUM.

WITH PEOPLE TOGETHER ON THE ROAD, JEALOUSY, STAGE MOTHERS, MARRIED AND SINGLE INDIVIDUALS, WITH COUNTLESS CIRCUMSTANCES THAT CAN EASILY GO WRONG, LAWRENCE CAME TO BELIEVE THAT “PRIDE IS A KIND OF DISHONESTY WHICH MAKES PEOPLE BLIND TO WHAT’S WHAT. TO KEEP MOVING AHEAD, A PERSON HAS TO SEE THE FACTS, AND THAT INCLUDES THE FAULTS THAT CREEP IN, AS WELL AS THE GOOD POINTS. ONLY THE PERSON WHO SEES FACTS CAN KNOW WHAT TO CORRECT.”

ABOUT WINE, WOMEN AND SONG, HE SAID: “IF A MAN’S HOME LIFE ISN’T AS IT SHOULD BE, HE WON’T BE ANY GOOD FOR THE BAND. BAD LOVE AFFAIRS ESPECIALLY SPOIL A MAN PLAYING.”

ANOTHER BAND EMERGED, WITH SUCCESS, RESULTING IN A 20-WEEK SHOW ON THE MUTUAL RADIO NETWORK FROM PITTSBURGH’S WILLIAM PENN HOTEL. HIS LEAD VOCALIST BECAME KNOWN AS THE CHAMPAGNE LADY. THAT WAS 1938. TWO YEARS LATER HE STARTED A NINE-YEAR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TRIANON BALLROOM IN CHICAGO, LOCATED AT COTTAGE GROVE AND EAST 62D, AND WITH ITS SISTER PROPERTY, THE ARAGON BALL

ROOM. LOCAL STATION, WGN, CARRIED TWELVE WELK BROADCASTS EACH WEEK.

SIDE APPEARANCES THROUGH THE COUNTRY RESULTED IN THE MOST IMPORTANT PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP OF LAWRENCE'S LIFE, A FELLOW HE MET ON TOUR IN ST. LOUIS. WHO WANTS TO GUESS? YES, MYRON FLOREN

MARKETING IDEAS APPEARED. DO YOU REMEMBER "THE CHAMPAGNE OF BOTTLED BEER? MILLER HIGH LIFE, OF COURSE, A FORTUITIOUS CONNECTION TO CHAMPAGNE MUSIC, AND A DEAL WITH MILLER INVOLVING A RADIO SHOW AND IMAGES OF BEER ON ALL MUSIC STANDS AND STAGE DECORATIONS. THE FIRST BROADCAST WAS JUNE 1, 1949. BY INTERMISSION OF MANY APPEARANCES AT DIFFERENT LOCATIONS, THE BEER WAS SOLD OUT. A MONEY DISPUTE IN CHICAGO LED LAWRENCE TO LOS ANGELES, AND TO KTLA, WHICH AGREED TO ONE TELEVISION SHOW, FROM THE LOCAL ARAGON BALLROOM, PROVIDED THAT WELK PAID ALL EXPENSES OF THE MUSICIANS. THE FIRST TELEVISION BROADCAST WAS MAY 2, 1951.

THE FIRST BROADCAST WAS PRECEDED BY AN EXTENDED RUN AT THE ARAGON, ITSELF A MATTER OF COINCIDENCE AND DECISIVE ACTION REGARDING HIS NATURAL AUDIENCE. UNEXPECTEDLY, HE GOT THE GIG JUST BY STOPPING BY TO SAY HELLO TO AN OLD FRIEND, A GIG WHICH, AT THE TIME, WAS THE LONGEST THEN KNOWN ENGAGEMENT OF ANY BAND AT ANY VENUE IN THE UNITED STATES. BUT EARLY ON HE REALIZED THAT THE ARAGON WAS A HOME FOR CHEAP LOVE MAKING SESSIONS. HE TOLD THE MANAGERS EITHER CLEAN UP OR GET ANOTHER BAND. SUPRISINGLY TO THE MANAGERS, RENOVATING THE FACILITY AND ENORCING DECORUM A NEW, LARGER, WEALTHIER, AND MORE INTERESTED AUDIENCE EMERGED.

LAWRENCE ADDED SPECIAL FEATURES, SUCH AS A TEENAGE MATINEE DANCES FOR WHICH THE BAR WAS CLOSED. TO ENCOURAGE CLASSIC DANCING IN PLACE OF WILD GYRATING, HE CONDUCTED WEEKLY DANCE CLASSES FOR HIS BEST PATRONS.

THEN, AN AVID FAN CONVINCED HER HUSBAND, BERT CARTER, OF THE DODGE MOTOR COMPANY, TO SEE THE SHOW, WHICH, IN THIS WONDERFUL WORLD OF COINCIDENCES, TOOK PLACE WHILE DODGE DEALERS WERE LOOKING FOR ADVERTISING TALENT. THEY COULD HAVE CHOSEN CONNIE HANES OR XAVIER CUGAT, BUT, NO, IT WAS TO BE LAWRENCE WELK, FOR NINE YEARS, WITH MANY CAST MEMBERS RECEIVING A NEW DODGE MOTOR CAR EVERY YEAR AND, SOON, ON ABC NATIONALLY.

THE FIRST NATIONAL ROADCAST WAS JULY 2, 1955, FEATURING THE MUSICIANS WHO HAD WORKED WITH HIM FOR YEARS, EXCEPT CHAMPAGNE LADY ROBERTA LINN WHO LEFT "FOR BETTER DEALS," ONLY TO SEE ALICE LON TAKE THAT POSITION ON NATIONAL TELEVISION.

MAY I NOW ADD TO THE BUSINESS PRINCIPLES YOU ALREADY HAVE HEARD? THE FIRST IS THAT LOYALTY PAYS. THE SECOND IS THIS QUOTE FROM NORMA ZIMMER:"MR. WELK HAS A GENIUS FOR CHOOSING PEOPLE THAT WOULD FIT IN. HE LIKED PEOPLE WHO HAD A POOR BEGINNING OR A STRUGGLE. HE SEEMED TO EMPATHIZE

WITH THOSE PEOPLE BECAUSE HE STRUGGLED FOR A LONG TIME. HE LIKED DEDICATION TO WORKING HARD. HE LOVED IT IF SOMEONE PRACTICED. THAT WAS ONE THING MYRON DID.”

YOU NOTE TODAY ON THE WFYI TAPED REPEATS THAT ACCORDIONIST MYRON FLOREN FREQUENTLY STANDS IN LAWRENCE’S PLACE. BORN IN SOUTH DAKOTA, MYRON BEGAN PLAYING AT AGE 7, WORKING EXTRAORDINARY HOURS TO IMPROVE HIS PLAY AND THEN WORKING THROUGH COLLEGE BY GIVING ACCORDION LESSONS. LAWRENCE AND MYRON HAD MET CASUALLY AT A RADIO STATION, BUT MORE SIGNIFICANTLY ONE NIGHT WHEN LAWRENCE ASKED MYRON TO COME TO THE STAGE AND PLAY. AFTER THAT, THE DEAL WAS SET.

THE GENUINE FEELING OF FAMILY AMONG CAST AND CREW—ANOTHER COMMON ELEMENT IN DURABLE BUSINESSES-- WAS EXTENDED PUBLICLY WHEN LAWRENCE BROUGHT FAMILY MEMBERS ON STAGE FOR CHRISTMAS FOR A SHOW THAT LAWRENCE THOUGHT WAS A DISASTER UNTIL, THE FOLLOWING MORNING, HE GOT A STANDING OVATION FROM PARISHENERS AT MARTIN OF TOURS CHURCH IN BRENTWOOD. HOWEVER, THE MOST

MEMORABLE CHRISTMAS SHOW EVENT WAS INTRODUCTION OF THE LENNON SISTERS WHO BECAME SYNONYMOUS WITH THE SHOW. KATHY, DIANE, PEGGY AND JANET. THEY HAD PERFORMED DRY BONES WITH THEIR FATHER AND UNCLES, OFTEN AT SERVICE CLUBS PAYING \$20 A NIGHT. LAWRENCE'S SON, LARRY WELK, JR., FOUND THEM. HE MET "SISTER DIANE" AS A STUDENT AT SANTA MONICA HIGH SCHOOL. LARRY TOLD DIANE "MY DAD IS HOME SICK. COULD YOU STOP BY A SING TO HIM?"

MY GUESS IS THAT MOST OF YOU REMEMBER THE LENON SISTERS. THE STORY OF THEIR DEPARTURE IS ITSELF A BIT MEMORABLE. THIS STORY MIGHT BE THE MOST PERTINENT TO THIS ESSAY, ANOTHER LESSON IN MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN BEHAVIOR, EVOLVING FROM THE OBVIOUS PHENOMENON THAT SIX YEARS LATER THE GIRLS WERE OLDER. THE POINT ARRIVED WHEN ALL FOUR WERE MARRIED. SOON THE PRODUCTION STAFF, WHEN NECESSARY, HAD TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO HIDE PREGNANT CONDITIONS. THEY STOOD BEHIND A POTTED PLANT OR A PIANO, OR A MAKE-BELIEVE TELEPHONE SWITCH BOARD, OR, OF COURSE, WORE DRESSES REFERRED TO AS TENTS. MEANWHILE, THEIR FAME INCREASED WITH SPREADS IN

FAN MAGAZINES AND GUEST APPEARANCES ON OTHER SHOWS. THEY WERE MAKING MORE THAN A QUARTER MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR, WHICH IS WELL OVER TWO AND A HALF MILLION TODAY. AGENTS HOUNDED THEM, SLOWLY PROMOTING THE MESSAGE THAT THE LAWRENCE WELK RELATIONSHIP HELD NO POSITIVE FUTURE. THIS CAME TO A HEAD WHEN THE GIRLS NO LONGER WISHED TO TRAVEL, AND PROPOSED APPEARING ON THE TELEVISION SHOW ONCE A MONTH. LAWRENCE COULD NOT ABIDE. HE SAID THIS WOULD NOT BE FAIR TO THE REST OF THE MUSICAL FAMILY. THE GIRLS UNCLE, LAWRENCE'S SON LARRY, AND OTHERS, COULD NOT SAVE THE SITUATION. THE DEED WAS DONE.

HIRING THE RIGHT PEOPLE WAS CRUCIAL TO THE FAMILY AND THE SHOW. AN EXAMPLE IS WHEN HIS SECRETARY, DOROTHY VAN, SUDDENLY RETIRED, LEAVING LAWRENCE WITH NOTHING JUST PRIOR TO HIS GIG IN SAN FRANCISCO. WITHIN TWO DAYS, A FRIEND INTRODUCED LOIS LAMONT, NOT YET 20 YEARS OLD, WHO STRUGGLED WITH HER BOSS'S POOR ENGLISH, BUT WON THE DAY, AND THE JOB, BY COUNTING SEATS. LAWRENCE TOLD HER NOT TO LEAVE HER POST AT A CLUB ENTRANCE. ACCOUNT FOR

EVERY TICKET, HE SAID. SHE STAYED, DESPITE THE
MANAGER'S ATTEMPT TO DIVERT. NEIL DIAMOND
TRAVELED WITH AN ACCOUNTANT, FOR THE SAME
REASON. AND MY FIRST SECRETARY OBTAINED HER JOB
UNIQUELY. SHE, DONNA, HEARD THAT MY BOSS ENJOYED
BASEBALL. SO, SHE ARRIVED AT THE INTERVIEW IN A
BASEBALL UNIFORM, AND GOT THE JOB.

SAN FRANCISCO STARTED WITH A SIX-WEEK CONTRACT AT
THE ST. FRANCIS HOTEL FRONTING UNION SQUARE,
EXTENDED PROMPTLY TO SIX MONTHS. MEANWHILE, THE
ARAGON BALLROOM IN LOS ANGELES WANTED THE BAND,
BADLY, AND KEPT CALLING AND CALLING.

AN UNEXPECTED ELEMENT OF LAWRENCE WELK'S LIFE, AT
LEAST TO ME, IS HIS ADVOCACY TO ELIMINATE CHILD
LABOR LAWS, EXPRESSED EARLY IN HIS CAREER, BUT
ARTICULATED BEST IN HIS 1979 BOOK, "THIS I BELIEVE." "I
BELIEVE WE SHOULD REPEAL IT—ABOLISH IT—WHATEVER
YOU WANT TO CALL IT. JUST GET RID OF IT—AND GIVE
OUR YOUNG PEOPLE THE RIGHT TO WORK AGAIN." HE DID
NOT WANT TO FORCE CHILDREN TO WORK, BUT ONLY TO

ALLOW THEM TO WORK, WHICH, HE THOUGHT, PROVIDES EARLY AND IMPORTANT LESSONS ABOUT THE VALUE OF WORK, AND ABOUT HOW TO GO ABOUT OBTAINING WORK, IF DESIRED. THE CHILD LABOR LAW, HE SAID, PUNISHED INNOCENT YOUNGSTERS INSTEAD OF THE ABUSIVE EMPLOYERS. HE ALSO PROMINENTLY AND VOCIFEROUSLY ARGUED FOR SMALL GOVERNMENT, PREDICTING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DISASTER IF GOVERNMENT WERE TO CONTINUE TO GROW.

THE 1979 BOOK CONTAINS OTHER IMPORTANT POINTS ABOUT BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN NATURE. FINDING QUALITY PEOPLE. SETTING HIGH GOALS, THEN, ENCOURAGING, ALWAYS ENCOURAGING, A LESSON CEMENTED IN HIS MIND WHEN HIS DRUMMER, GORDON MALIE, ASKED “LAWRENCE, WHAT MUST I DO TO GET A COMPLIMENT OUT OF YOU?” IN FACT, LAWRENCE HAD BEEN PRAISING HIM TO OTHERS, BUT NOT TO THE MAN HIMSELF. FROM THAT POINT ON, HE PRAISED AND ENCOURAGED WHEREVER HE COULD.

AND: NO CONTRACTS. "I WILL NOT TIE UP SOMEONE WITH A CONTRACT," HE SAID, "BECAUSE TO ME, FREEDOM IS TOO PRECIOUS. I THINK WE WORK BEST IN FREEDOM; WE DEVELOP OUR TALENTS BEST. WE SELL HAPPINESS. HOW CAN YOU BE HAPPY WITHOUT FREEDOM?"

DID THIS PHILOSOPHY AND OTHER BUSINESS PRINCIPLES RESULT IN SUCCESS?? BETWEEN 1951 AND 1979, THE BAND WENT FROM 17 MEMBERS TO OVER 50; TOTAL STAFF WENT TO 300, MANY MANAGING SIDE INVESTMENTS IN ENTERTAINMENT AND REAL ESTATE. ALTHOUGH PERFORMERS WORKED FOR SCALE, A PROFIT SHARING PLAN HELPED BOTH TO KEEP PEOPLE AND TO INSURE THEIR FUTURES. TO HIM, "LOVE IS NOT LOVE UNTIL YOU GIVE IT AWAY." SHARING MEANS MORE. "SHARING MEANS CLOSENESS, TRUE FRIENDSHIP, A FEELING THAT THERE IS SOMEONE WHO REALLY CARES, REALLY AND TRULY CARES WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU AND YOUR LIFE."

THE SINGLE BIGGEST, MOST SIGNIFICANT EVENT FOR LAWRENCE WELK WAS HIS SEPARATION FROM THE ABC TELEVISION NETWORK, ANNOUNCED ON A TUESDAY, MARCH 1971, ENDING

A 16-YEAR RELATIONSHIP. A POWERFUL FACTOR WAS A FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION DECISION TO REMOVE 30 MINUTES OF NATIONAL PROGRAMING ON NATIONAL NETWORKS TO ALLOW AND TO ENCOURAGE LOCAL STATIONS TO CREATE CONTENT. HIS VALUED TIME SLOT WAS MOVED UP ONE HOUR ON SATURDAY NIGHTS, EXPOSING THE SHOW TO DELAYS RELATED TO BROADCASTING SPORTS EVENTS EARLIER IN THE DAY. AND SO, ABC DECIDED NOT TO RENEW.

AN EXAMPLE OF HIS RELATIONSHIPS WITH TELEVISION, WITH VIEWERS, AND WITH SPONSORS, WAS A PHONE CALL DURING DINNER THAT NIGHT FROM MARTY ROSENHAUS, PRESIDENT OF THE J.B. WILLIAMS COMPANY, DECLARING AN UNCONDITIONAL COMMITMENT TO CONTINUING SPONSORING “WHEREVER YOU GO.” AMONG PRODUCTS YOU MIGHT RECALL ARE

AQUA VELVA, AND, YEARS AGO, THE FIRST SOAP
FORUMATED FOR USE IN SHAVING MUGS.

NO GREATER TRIBUTE TO THE BUSINESS
ACCUMEN OF LAWRENCE WELK THAT IN LESS
THAN A WEEK, THE LAWRENCE WELK NETWORK
WAS CREATED AND THE SHOW CONTINUED FOR
MORE THAN ANOTHER DECADE.

MORE THAN 110 ABC AFFILIATES, AS WELL AS
AFFILIATES OF CBS AND NBC, STOOD BY TO
OBTAIN THE SYNDICATED SHOW. WITHIN A FEW
MONTHS, THE SHOW WAS SEEN IN MORE THAN
210 MARKETS.

THE LAWRENCE WELK SHOW TODAY IS CARRIED
BY APPROXIMATELY 150 STATIONS.

THE LAWRENCE WELK SHOW HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTOR TO PUBLIC TELEVISION, GENERATING SUBSTANTIAL REVENUE OVER THE YEARS. WHILE I COULDN'T FIND AN EXACT FIGURE FOR THE TOTAL AMOUNT GENERATED, I CAN SHARE SOME IMPRESSIVE FACTS APPARENTLY FROM THE LATE 1990S.

- THE SHOW AIRS ON **279 PUBLIC TELEVISION STATIONS** NATIONWIDE.
- IT REACHES OVER **THREE MILLION VIEWERS EACH WEEK.**
- IT IS THE **HIGHEST-RATED SYNDICATED SERIES** ON PUBLIC TELEVISION ACCORDING TO NIELSEN RATINGS.
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AN IMPOTANT FRUSTRATION FOR LAWRENCE WAS NOT HAVING A HIT RECORD, A PROBLEM RESOLVED AROUND 1959 BY AFFILIATING WITH RANDY WOOD OF GALLATIN, TENNESSEE. OVER SEVERAL YEARS, THE FOLLOWING EMERGED AS HITS: *CALCUTTA, WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL, GALVESTON, MOON RIVER, CANDIDA AND NO NO NANETTE.*

“...ANYONE WHO IS DETERMINED TO BREAK UP A BUSINESS, OR AN ORGANIZATION, OR A FAMILY__OR A SIX-PIECE BAND__CAN DO SO IF HE PUTS ENOUGH EFFORT IN IT. WHENEVER PEOPLE CAN BE MADE UNHAPPY ENOUGH, AND RESTLESS ENOUGH WITH THEIR JOBS, THEY WILL LEAVE, WHETHER THEY HAVE ANY REAL PLANS IN MIND OR NOT. IT’S JUST HUMAN NATURE, AND IT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED TO ME OVER AND OVER AGAIN THROUGH MY YEARS IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS—THE LENNON SISTERS PROBABLY BEING THE MOST FAMOUS CASE OF ALL. IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYER

AND EMPLOYEES. IT HAS TO DO WITH HUMAN NATURE
ITSELF...WHENEVER ANYONE WANTS TO LEAVE, THE BEST THING
TO DO IS ACCEPT THEIR DECISION AND HELP MAKE THE
TRANSITION AS EASY AS POSSIBLE. ... IT IS JUST PART OF LIFE.”

Quotes

**WELL, FOR ONE THING, WHEN WE HAVE HAD A LITTLE SUCCESS, IT'S SO
EASY TO BE BOSSY WITH FOLKS, TO THINK WE ARE PERFECT. THAT'S VE RY
DANGEROUS.**

**FOR NEARLY THIRTY YEARS, I'VE BEEN WORKING UP READ SLOW. IT HAS
TO BE THAT WAY. IF YOU BUILD FAST, YOU FALL FAST.**

I JUST TRY TO PLEASE OUR AUDIENCE...DECENT PEOPLE, THE KIND OF FOLKS THAT HAVE BEEN MY FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS ALL MY LIFE.

GOOD MUSICIANS ALONE DON'T MAKE A GOOD BAND. YOU HAVE TO HAVE A GOOD CHARACTER. I'D RATHER HAVE A MAN WITH GOOD CHARACTER WORKING FOR ME, EVEN IF HE ISN' QUITE AS GOOD A PERFORMER. YOU CAN BUILD UP A MAN'S MUSICIANSHIP IF HE WILL COOPERATE AND WORK HARD. IT IS QUITE OFTEN HARDER TO CHANGE HIS CHARACTER IF IT IS WRONG SOMEHOW.

AFTER ONE ATTEMPT TO INSERT COMEDY IN THE SHOW, LAWRENCE SAID "YOU HAVE TO REALIZE THAT OUR SHOW IS NINETY-FIVE PERCENT MUSIC, AND ONLY FIFTEEN PERCENT COMEDY"

CHAMPAGNE MUSIC IS SHAMPOO MUSIC

CRITICIZED FOR HIRING AN ACCORDIONIST CLEARLY SUPERIOR, WELK SAID: "OF COURSE HE IS BETTER THAN I AM. THAT IS WHY I HIRED HIM. THE ONLY KINDS OF MUSICIANS I HIRE ARE FELLOWS WHO ARE BETTER THAN I AM."

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PBS, *From The Start, a Tribute to Lawrence Welk*, with most of cast and Barbara Mandrell, produced in 1993, broadcast again in 2023.

YouTube: Numerous old shows, reviews, single takes.

NBC, appearance with Johnny Caron on The Tonight Show.