

PROFILES OF SURVIVAL

GROWING OUT LOUD, DARLING

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SHE IS THE PEOPLE “pusher”, he is the systems guy. It's all about the people—coaching, consulting, marketing, human resources and more. Did I meet someone who is as energetic, passionate, and excited about people and business as I am?



I sat with Amy House, the founder and owner of Growing Out Loud, Darling in San Antonio. In her corporate career, Amy was hired by companies who had underperforming divisions to correct that situation. She then started getting headhunted by companies who were looking for fixers. She loved what she did and in 2014 she decided it was time to stop working for other people and to completely do her own thing.

Roxana: Who are your clients?

Amy: We work with executives or business owners, start-ups or companies that have been in business for many years, and everything in between. We do all industries, blue collar, banking, real estate, authors writing books, people doing product development, restaurants etc. Business is business and people are people.

Roxana: What do you like most about what you do?

Amy: I thrive on watching people succeed. When other people are succeeding that is when I succeed. I really believe in that. Business at its core is its people. Whether it's people working to improve themselves and how they think and operate, or how they communicate with others, how they lead and mentor others, every part of a business has a people-driven system. Businesses that struggle, struggle to communicate with people they lead. They struggle to build a culture with people. It's all about people. If I can help other people recognize how to improve that, they start getting results.

Roxana: How do you help businesses and people?

Amy: We consult and coach in different ways. Consulting is us providing a recommendation but then clients are on their own to execute. Coaching brings accountability and we have different programs like mastermind networking or one-on-one coaching programs. It's very strategic and people must commit and do the work for it to be effective.

Roxana: What is toughest for business owners/professional to address?

Amy: They have to become self-aware that they've stopped growing personally and change that. They have to invest in their people constantly and commit to quarterly evaluations and discussions. And, they have to let go of services and products that are no longer viable. “We've always done it this way, or we invested so much time in it” is a recipe for business failure.



Roxana: How has COVID affected your clients' businesses?

Amy: I have always said that when people are retreating it is an opportunity to push forward. When you see people play defense rather than offense, there is an opportunity for your business to gain market share and do it strategically. The clients that worked with us during COVID grew 20% to 40%. Why? Because other people in their busi-

nesses pulled back, and our clients showed up in a big way. They had parking lot parties with social distancing, meetings at picnic benches with people bringing their own lunch. Salespeople met clients in their parking lots. When other companies were stuck and went silent, we had clients showcase their team and how their team was still servicing customers working from home, with their children doing homework at the dining room table. The message was simple, “We're still here for you, and we are people just like you. Dealing with the same obstacles and we are here to help.” We simply changed the marketing message. And people engaged.

Roxana: What did your company do to grow during last 18 months?

Amy: Our company bought fun simple gifts every month and we mailed them out to clients letting them know we are here, we are working. Our business doubled last year, just because we made people smile. We weren't sending gifts asking for their business, we were just letting them know there is still joy. People want to be around people who are positive, and it worked for us. We started telling people that we're going to be at this park, on this day, so bring McDonald's or Burger King or Whataburger and let's meet – and people would show up.

Eighteen months since COVID started and Amy and Doug have just opened their new office after always working virtually. They started a podcast show last year, have a YouTube Channel and a book is in the future. They discussed the opportunity to franchise their business model for people to do consulting or marketing with a model that works, or even open satellite offices in places like Dallas or Albuquerque.

Their approach and advice is quite simple: be creative, don't pull back, figure out how to move forward no matter what, because when you push forward, you get business mileage and gain market share. Like they would say, use these techniques and “Grow Out Loud, Darling”. ■