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8 Lessons for Businesswomen Racing to Build a New World

By Laurel Delaney

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I read Laura Hillenbrand's thrilling story, "Seabiscuit: An American Legend," and couldn't help but recognize the parallel between women in the business world and that of a great racehorse who has a fighting spirit like no other. In the race to build a new world, let's examine the eight lessons women can learn from Seabiscuit, the horse that achieved greatness while captivating our imaginations.

1). Learn your horse or person.

Let's face it. Women can be mysterious — happy one day, sad the next. We can be ruthless but charming. Yet, for a woman to do well in the business world, she needs a close observer who knows her, realizes her potential, cultivates it and sees that others get out of her way to enable her success.

Women must actively identify executives who have clout in an organization and with whom they have rapport and ask them to be mentors. Mentors help women learn what goes on in boardrooms and how executives make critical decisions. In other words, a mentor must "learn the woman," for her to do well.

2). Make friends.

Just as Seabiscuit required loyal animal companions to feel safe, secure and ready to do his best, women need the same in the workplace. When you develop loyal friends, you learn how to relax and do your best work.

3). Turn your competitive instincts outward.

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Competitive instincts turned outward are good, but when competitive instincts are turned inward, it's disastrous. Why? For a horse, it happens when the jockey holds the reins too tight. For women, it's when a person cuts her no slack and fails to provide respect, appreciation and acknowledgment of her existence in the business world. If you loosen the grip on a horse's reins, she's free to take off. If you loosen the grip on "cat-fight" scenarios and the "good ole' boy's" network, a businesswoman is bound to take off and flourish.

4). Do only what you want to do.

The trainer for Seabiscuit transformed him into a pliant, happy horse. How? He vouched to never again use force on the horse or to make him do what he didn't want to do. Women don't want to be told what to do. They know what to do. Let them do it.

5). Unearth your potential.

Seabiscuit learned to trust his trainer and rider, and this became the foundation for their relationship. What happened as a result? His love of running returned. So long as he was treated like a gentleman, he'd run his heart out. He acquired cool confidence. He was a new horse. Seabiscuit finally understood the game. His trainer and rider had "unearthed him."

Women want to be "unearthed" too. Put trust and faith in her hands and she will develop an undying spirit that leads to victory.

6). Intimidate all.

As Hillenbrand's book states, "Where other horses relied solely on speed to win, Seabiscuit used intimidation." Women should too.

7). Save the last reserve of courage for the end.

Hillenbrand wrote, "If he [Seabiscuit] became too absorbed in rubbing a particular horse's nose in his defeat, he risked being unable to regain his momentum when the closers came after him. Fortunately, though taunting was one of Seabiscuit's greatest pleasures, once he was challenged, the games ended. In a fight he was all business. 'Did you ever see two stallions fight?' Seabiscuit's trainer Smith asked. 'They look about evenly matched -- most times they are -- but one of 'em has that last reserve of courage and energy which licks the other.'

Seabiscuit has it." Women do too. Preserve it and pull it out at the end.

8). Stake a claim on being unbeaten and unchallenged.

Many great racehorses from Seabiscuit to Seattle Slew to Secretariat all had something in common. They each had the desire to stake a claim on being unbeaten and unchallenged throughout the course of their careers. Women must do the same. We must speak up and have the good horse sense to own our way in life. Just like a world-class racehorse, you are going to fight your way through to the winner's circle. In doing so, businesswomen will win the race to building a new world.

Laurel Delaney runs a Chicago-based global marketing, consulting and web content providing company aimed toward entrepreneurs and small businesses. She is currently at work on, "Women Entrepreneurs Take On The World," to be published fall, 2002. She can be reached at ldelaney@globetrade.com

Miscellaneous Racing Sports

By Joel Noah

Racing is a sport that has been in existence literally for thousands of years. It's certainly progressed since the days of the chariot races in ancient Greece but the drive behind racing still remains the same. When people race, regardless if it's cars, boats, horses or themselves they do it to win. Being declared the fastest is the ultimate goal.

Races have progressed significantly since their inception. History shows that the first races were on foot; two or more men racing one another to determine which was the fastest. We still have foot races today and they can be incredibly competitive with challengers vying for the prestige of Olympic gold medals.

Races involving cars have gained popularity in recent years. Motor sports fans can attest the fact that watching a Formula One or NASCAR race can get the blood pumping. The drivers race at breakneck speeds with an incredible amount of precision. Bleachers full of fans take in the races and millions more watch from their homes as men and women get behind the wheel of cars and try to out race each other.

There are many different types of car racing and another fan favorite is rally racing. Rally racing involves cars racing around on regular city roads. This type of racing is challenging for the driver because during each race they are confronted with a course that is unfamiliar to them. One of the aspects of rally car racing that makes it unique is that it's done year round. Races occur in every type of weather and climate isn't really an issue. The cars are specifically designed for the race and the drivers concentrate on moving from point-to-point within the course.

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Another popular type of racing involves wheels but only two. Motorbike racing is a fast growing sport and those interested aren't just the younger crowd. There are several different variations of motorbike racing. One is called motocross in which the participants take to the dirt. They run a challenging obstacle type course with their motorbikes, including handling difficult turns and jumps. Most motocross racing is on the amateur level and there are even courses specifically designed for the youth driver.

The other type of motorbike racing is done on asphalt. Some of these are amateur races between people who want to see how well their bike outperforms the competition's. Others are men and women who have developed their riding skills for years in preparation for a specific race. Motorbike races are held in different venues all over the world, with some of the prize money being considerable.

Some types of racing have human influence but the brunt of the speed is supplied by another type of animal. Horse racing is a prime example of this. Horse racing has been an interest of people for centuries. One of the most popular types of horse racing is thoroughbred racing. Generally, thoroughbred racing involves a long track that the horse sprints down. In this type of racing there is a jockey who is specially trained to guide the horse to victory. This is the most well-known form of horse racing and what most people are referring to when they say they are "going to the races."

Another type of horse racing involves more than a straight sprint. The horse in this instance has to overcome not just a track but obstacles that include turns and jumps as well. This is termed National Hunt Racing and is most widely seen in the United Kingdom.

Racing whether its by foot, automobile or animal is a sport that will never fade into oblivion. We are fascinated with speed and love to see people challenging each other to perform at their highest possible levels

The latest work of Joel Noah can be found at:



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