Get Your Message Out: Becoming a Successful Nutrition Communications and Technology Entrepreneur

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What We’ll Discuss

- Why Technology and Communications?
- Qualities and skills successful entrepreneurs have
- How to evaluate your entrepreneurial qualities and skills
- Advice and lessons learned from seasoned RD tech and communications entrepreneurs
About Me (more or less in order)

- WIC Nutritionist
- RD—clinical
- RD, CDE—outpatient
- Clinical Nutrition Manager
- Private practice on the side
- Consultant for dotcom startups
- Full-time dotcommer—eFit, WeightWatchers.com
- Entrepreneur/CEO: Skelly Skills: CE and training for RDs, CDEs and other health professionals (www.skellyskills.com)
Part I:
Why Should Dietitians Focus on Communications and Technology?

"Dietitians need to join in the conversation if they want to be heard." Jenny Westerkamp, RD, CEO, All Access Internships, & Social Media Marketing Consultant
How We Defined It

- Dietitian entrepreneurs who offer a communications and/or technology business or product:
  - Communications defined as ‘any business relying on the written or spoken word designed for mass consumption as its key product or service’
  - Technology defined as ‘any business offering a technology- or social-media based product or service’
Why Should Entrepreneurial Dietitians Focus on Technology and Communications?

- Amplify your voice—only see 8 clients a day—the average blog gets that many visitors in less than an hour—and it’s available 24/7

- Shrink your time/effort—what’s the cost of your time?
  - Can’t re-use what you said to one client with the next--high cost of labor and time
  - Technology makes it cheap, easy and quick!
Why Should Entrepreneurial Dietitians Focus on Technology and Communications?

- Everybody else is doing it—NO barriers to entry (so walk on through!)

“We need more dietitians in the media (and social media) to take the nutrition conversation away from the vocal minority who are not qualified to dominate the conversation. Get communications training and/or mentoring to boost your skills and confidence - what you don’t know CAN hurt you.” Melissa Joy Dobbins, Owner, Sound Bites, Inc.: media and communication skills to help dietitians gain more visibility, influence and success.  www.soundbitesnutrition.com

“I write my blog because it drives me crazy when the media misleads the public on a recent study. People look to me to set them straight and they appreciate when I blog about them.” Peggy Korody, MS, RD. Author: Little Hands in the Kitchen.  http://rd4health.com/little-hands-in-the-kitchen/Blogger, RD4Health: http://rd4health.com/category/blog/

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Why Should Entrepreneurial Dietitians Focus on Technology and Communications?

- The world is changing.

"In today's market, credentials are not as powerful as they once were. In order for a business to be successful, communications are key. Utilize all aspects of social media to get your message out. Our non-credentialed competition is capturing the market based on social media skills rather than expertise." Faye Berger-Mitchell, author: Making Nutrition Your Business: Private Practice and Beyond; Be Your Own Boss Starter Kit and The RD Reimbursement Guide. www.nutritionpracticeadvisors.com

"It is vital for RDs to learn about using technology, as the practice of nutrition is changing very rapidly. This includes charting and workflows, apps and social media." Catherine Frederico, MS RDN LDN, iPhone App Developer, www.NutritionVision.info, www.AppyLiving.com, www.TheBigBlueberry.com , www.FoodFocusArcade.com

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What are Dietitian Entrepreneurs Doing in Technology and Communications?

- Writing books
- Writing blogs
- Doing media training and communications consulting
- Creating apps
- Providing continuing education
- Creating online tools for practitioners and clients
- Providing social media marketing expertise
- Customizing EMR for nutrition experts in practice
- Offering corporate wellness programs
- And much more...
Part II:
Your Personality: Do you have the Entrepreneur Persona?

"...very few people achieve success in ventures that aren't good fits with their innate personalities." Bill Wagner, The Entrepreneur Next Door. P.71
True or False?
There’s one ‘type’ of successful entrepreneur personality.
Personality isn’t Everything... but it can’t be overlooked

- Over 1500 entrepreneurs surveyed on their personality characteristics
- Average age: 31
- Average net worth: $3.4 million

Adapted from *The Entrepreneur Next Door* (Wagner, 2006)

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Personality isn’t Everything... but it can’t be overlooked

- Four personality attributes highly correlated with successful entrepreneurs
- Very difficult, if not impossible, to change
- If you don’t have ‘entrepreneur personality’, there are still ways to compensate
  - How you run your business
  - What type of business you choose to operate

Adapted from *The Entrepreneur Next Door* (Wagner, 2006)

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Four personality attributes MOST impact entrepreneurial success

- Dominance
- Sociability
- Relaxation
- Compliance

All Range from Low to High

Adapted from *The Entrepreneur Next Door* (Wagner, 2006)

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Dominance

Degree to which control is sought over a given situation or environment

High levels:
- Competitive & goal-oriented
- Aggressive in resolving uncertainties
- Wide variety of interests, like handling many things simultaneously
- See big picture, strategically-oriented

Adapted from The Entrepreneur Next Door (Wagner, 2006)
Dominance

- Low levels:
  - Cautious, deliberate
  - Go out of way to get along with others
  - Work for good of group rather than seeking out individual recognition
  - Find confrontational and competitive situations to be difficult

Adapted from *The Entrepreneur Next Door* (Wagner, 2006)
Sociability

- Defined largely by styles of communication.
- High levels:
  - Use more words to tell stories
  - Preference for working with people
  - Enjoy receiving recognition
  - Want to be part of/lead a well-run team

Adapted from *The Entrepreneur Next Door* (Wagner, 2006)
Sociability

- Low levels:
  - More analytical
  - Self-conscious
  - Serious and introspective

Adapted from *The Entrepreneur Next Door* (Wagner, 2006)
Relaxation

- Determines pace of work or sense of urgency—speed of work

- Higher levels:
  - Prefer stability and long-term, family-like relationships
  - Want to be rewarded for loyalty, and enjoy familiar surroundings and activities
  - More methodical, calm and patient

*Adapted from The Entrepreneur Next Door* (Wagner, 2006)
Relaxation

- **Lower levels:**
  - Crave freedom from repetition
  - Need a varied pace
  - Thrive in a changing environment
  - Want fewer controls and are good at multitasking
  - Work well under pressure and comfortable sharing pressure with others

*Adapted from The Entrepreneur Next Door (Wagner, 2006)*
Compliance

- All about the details

- Higher levels:
  - Prefer security, stability
  - Want to know exactly what the rules are
  - Deal better with day-to-day responsibilities
  - Like practical applications; need strong direction and leadership
  - Precise, cautious, self-disciplined, structured, and sometimes perfectionist

Adapted from The Entrepreneur Next Door (Wagner, 2006) (c) 2014 Skelly Skills
Compliance

Lower levels:

- More independent
- Enjoy freedom from structure, micromanagement
- Want opportunities to prove their own ideas in a work environment

Adapted from *The Entrepreneur Next Door* (Wagner, 2006)

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Which are most correlated with successful entrepreneurs?

- High dominance or low dominance?
- High sociability or low sociability?
- High relaxation or low relaxation?
- High compliance or low compliance?
The Successful Entrepreneur: The Generalist

**High dominance

**Low compliance

Four types:
- Trailblazer
- Go-getter
- Manager
- Motivator

Adapted from *The Entrepreneur Next Door* (Wagner, 2006)

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If you’re a Generalist...

- You’re driven by:
  - Ego
  - Status
  - Independence
  - Sense of Urgency

- Tend to be naturally better at the sales function

*Adapted from The Entrepreneur Next Door (Wagner, 2006)*

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The ‘Wantrepreneur’: The Specialist

- **Low dominance**
- **High compliance**

**Three types:**
- Authorities
- Collaborators
- Diplomats

Adapted from *The Entrepreneur Next Door* (Wagner, 2006)

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If you’re a Specialist…

- You’re driven by the four S’s
- Best in:
  - Environments where success is determined mainly by ability to follow P&P
  - Businesses with strong rules and structure
  - Low-risk environments
- Watch out for the sales function!

Adapted from *The Entrepreneur Next Door* (Wagner, 2006)
Part III:
It’s Not Just Who you Are, It’s What you Do!

“Creating a successful business from nothing requires motivation and perseverance that border on obsession....” Joseph Mancuso, start-up expert and founder, the CEO Clubs, Inc.
Qualities of Successful Entrepreneurs

- Skills and behaviors that are correlated with successful entrepreneurs
- Unlike personality, you CAN change (most!)
Theme 1: Don’t Bet the Ranch

- Typical entrepreneur not how the media portrays him or her
- Tend to set realistic, achievable goals
- Risks taken are calculated ones that depend more on personal skills than on chance

Adapted from “Do You Fit the Mold For Startup Success?” (Mancuso, 2005)
Theme 1: Don’t Bet the Ranch

- The Takeaway: Do a personal inventory
- “Without a doubt, knowing your strengths and areas for growth is essential to be successful and satisfied in your chosen career. Unfortunately, too many of us fall into our career path.” Jean Caton, MBA, RD, Career Coach and Speaker
- “When choosing your business or product idea, leverage your communications strengths: what comes easily to you is not easy for everyone.” Jessica Setnick, RD
  - Eating Disorders Boot Camp ... www.EatingDisordersBootCamp.com
    Training for dietitians about eating disorders
  - Eating DisorderJobs.com ... www.EatingDisorderJobs.com learn about and search for jobs in the eating disorders field

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Theme 2: The Eternal Optimist

- Believe with the right amount of time or money can accomplish anything
- Redefine ‘right place at the right time’
- The Midwestern shoe salesman—which ‘daughter’ are you?

Adapted from “Do You Fit the Mold For Startup Success?” (Mancuso, 2005)
Theme 2: The Eternal Optimist

The Takeaway: Do you naturally see opportunities or obstacles?

"I am not afraid of ‘no’...it takes at least 10 ‘no’s’ to get the ‘yes’. If you can’t take those odds, being an entrepreneur is not for you.” Denice Ferko-Adams, Owner, Wellness Solutions, Corporate Wellness company: http://www.wellnesspress.com/

“My path to entrepreneurship was borne of the need to find a different way to hold the food conversation with consumers...A conversation that could help Americans make food choices that would be meaningful to themselves, their communities and their country (sustainability to the core).” Amanda Archibald, RD, Owner: Field to Plate. www.fieldtoplate.com.
Theme 3: How do you Solve Problems?

- Entrepreneurs differ in the way they approach challenges and obstacles
- Don’t force a solution
- Keep the problem in mind, but move on
- Ties in with personality, but can be changed

Adapted from “Do You Fit the Mold For Startup Success?” (Mancuso, 2005)

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Theme 3: How do you Solve Problems?

- The Takeaway: carefully consider your problem-solving style

  "Creating a large communications project of this nature, I learned the importance of using a timeline. The timeline made me aware of when deadlines were in advance so that I was on top of everything and prepared for each next step." Amy Newman Shapiro, RD, CDN, CPT, author: Lose It For The Last Time  Book or ebook: www.loseitforthelasttime.com

- "There is a steep learning curve when beginning a blog, a new business, or writing a book. Reach out to colleagues who have already navigated the process; ask lots of questions and learn from their mistakes." Niki Strealy, RD, The Diarrhea Dietitian: Expert Advice, Practical Solutions, and Strategic Nutrition. Book, website and blog: www.diarrheadietitian.com
Theme 4: The Competitive and Intrepid Spirit

- Competition often key to improving products and services
- Many simply improved upon existing business models—they did things better
- Vince Lombardi said it best!

Adapted from “Do You Fit the Mold For Startup Success?” (Mancuso, 2005)
Theme 4: The Competitive and Intrepid Spirit

The Takeaway:

- Personality characteristic but one that can be honed
- Find ways to keep yourself motivated and inspired

"Coca-cola never stops advertising. RDs need to follow that path as well. My book sells because I try to never stop promoting it. It's a lot of work! Nancy Clark, MS, RD, Author: Nancy Clark’s Sports Nutrition Guidebook (5th Edition).”
www.nancyclarkrd.com

"Working by yourself can get lonely. If you can, find and work with a reliable partner that has just as much passion as you do. Ideally you have complementary skill sets, but equally high passion.” Jason Machowsky, MS, RD, author, Death of the Diet. www.deathofthediet.com (includes blog).

"Follow your passion and keep changing until what you are doing "feels right." Then, create your niche and your own special "brand." Make sure you get your "brand" out there in the early days of your career any way you can.” Janet Bond Brill, PhD, RD, author, Cholesterol Down: 10 simple steps to lower your cholesterol in 4 weeks; Prevent a Second Heart Attack: 8 Foods, 8 Weeks to Reverse Heart Disease and Blood Pressure Down: the 10-step program to lower your blood pressure in 4 weeks. Named Nutrition Entrepreneur of the Year, 2012!

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“There is never a right time and there is no such thing as being an entrepreneur and being risk free. You will make money and you will lose money.”

Amanda Archibald, RD, Owner, Field to Plate
Ready to Become an Entrepreneur?

- We’ve talked about you...
- Now it’s time to focus on your customer!
Keeping Your Customer First!

- "Always make your products or programs about 'them', not you!" Ashvini Mashru, MA, RD, LDN, Speaker/Blogger: weight loss the non-dieting way and making lifestyle changes for busy moms: [www.wellnessnutritionconcepts.com/](http://www.wellnessnutritionconcepts.com/)

- "Become familiar with your subject matter and, more importantly, your audience, and then write something that you know about that speaks to your audience. Promote it more than you think that you need to in creative ways through connections and social media." Jill Nussinow, RD (aka The Veggie Queen). Author: The New Fast Food: The Veggie Queen Pressure Cooks Whole Food Meals in Less than 30 Minutes. [www.theveggiequeen.com](http://www.theveggiequeen.com)
Almost 90% of RDs surveyed indicated they focused on communications entrepreneurship because they saw a need within their area of expertise and filled it!

- What are your customers asking for?
- What wish lists do you have as a practitioner?
“I wrote this book because, when I became a school nutrition educator 20 years ago, I kept looking for a book like this to help me.” Connie Evers, MS, Rd author, How to Teach Nutrition to Kids (3rd Edition)

“I learned about a new, effective, evidence-based diet for IBS and found there were no teaching tools available in the U.S. I created these products to fill that niche.” Patsy Catsos, RD, author: IBS--Free at Last! (2012), paperback, a book to help people with IBS learn to manage their irritable bowel syndrome with a FODMAP elimination diet. http://www.ibsfree.net

KaiZenRD EMR was showcased as one of the 2013 "Hottest Health IT Technologies for Improving Healthcare Delivery and Patient Outcomes" by the Venture+Forum of the mHealth Summit in Washington DC. We created it to help RDs in private practice manage their billing and recordkeeping.” Karen Patalano, RD, co-owner


Skelly Skills born from this same experience
Thank You!

- Keep working on your business, or business idea!
- For more on learning entrepreneurial skills, and honing your strengths—consider the 25 CPE program *The Nutrition Entrepreneur* from Skelly Skills. For more information, visit [www.skellyskills.com](http://www.skellyskills.com).
- Please sign up for our free monthly CE webinars with our authors at [www.skellyskills.com](http://www.skellyskills.com)!

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