

Elevating the Service Industry with Lynda Ellis

Linda Ostovitz: Hello everyone and welcome to Real Talk Real Growth. I'm Linda Ostovitz and I am thrilled to have as our guest today, my friend Lynda Ellis, who is the owner of Capitol Concierge. I met Lynda through my board service with the Howard County Chamber of Commerce. I am the immediate past board chair, and I'm still a member of the board as I have been for a number of years, and right now, chair the small business committee. And in that position, I have been very fortunate to have great opportunities to really get to know people who perhaps I might not have had the opportunity to get to know as I have. And Lynda is one of those people, and I think she really hit my radar last year when she was awarded recognition from the Howard County Chamber of Commerce.

And I don't remember what it was called, Lynda, but the award was given to you for the fact that you had grown so much in a short period of time in a business life. We were looking at three years and how much you had grown your business. And frankly, I enjoyed being with you and spending time with you, but when I saw that, I thought, oh my goodness, I need to know more about this woman's business acumen, which is extraordinary.

So Lynda, thank you so much for being with us today. Look forward to our conversation and sharing how it is that you have come to be so successful.

Lynda Ellis: Thank you so much for the invitation allowing me this honor. Linda, it is really, really special and may I say you are such a leader for business and for women, so thank you.

Linda Ostovitz: Well, thank you so much, but let's talk about you.

So, Capitol Concierge, is the name of your business. And if you would share with our listeners, what Capitol Concierge does. I know I was blown away when you told me, so let's just blow away the rest of our audience this afternoon.

Lynda Ellis: Well, thank you. We are the people who do whatever you need us to do that you don't have time to do. So, our company is 35 years old. We were

started with five commercial office properties where we are the concierge of the front desk, the person who greets you and says goodnight to you when you leave.

And I came to the company in 98 and we have flourished because of our team. And so we're in residential properties, we're at the front desk and we're in private companies like, Facebook and Google and Generali, which is the largest travel insurance company in the world. And we're in private companies who care about their employees and want their employees to have a better work life.

And we do those things that, as long as it's legal and ethical, that you don't have time to do. The everyday stuff that you think I'll get to, I'll get to, I'll get to, but you never do.

Linda Ostovitz: So it's very interesting that you point out in particular, as long as it's legal and ethical, because this woman, as you will hear, has lines in the sand for what she does, how she does it, who works for her, who doesn't work for her, all of which really have I'm oversimplifying this, have led her to the success that she enjoys right now.

So I heard what you said, we do what other people don't have the time to do, but could you give us some examples of the extraordinary things? I think they're extraordinary. Maybe your every day, I dunno, things that your concierge have done for your clients.

Lynda Ellis: I'm happy to do that because a lot of them are such fun things. We do things that are not as fun. I'll go into that. But some of the fun things that we have done is one of our Facebookers at Facebook emailed our concierge and said, I need 30 yards of this purple fabric. And he had sent the concierge a picture in a bizarre magazine of an advertisement and there was a model in it wearing a purple jacket, and he said, I need 30 yards of that material. It was not an advertisement for the jacket itself, so our concierge were all very resourceful. That's one of the things we looked for. And so the concierge called Bazaar Magazine, found out who the advertiser was.

Got the advertising agency so that we could find out who the model agency was and then determine whether that model wearing that purple jacket was a model modeling a designer jacket or was it a jacket that he just put on? So once we found that out, we called the manufacturer of the jacket to determine who was the manufacturer of the material of that jacket. And within two weeks, the Facebooker had. 30 yards of material that he wanted.

Linda Ostovitz: What resources you have. I think you also shared with me that one of your concierge arranged a funeral for one of the, I'm gonna use the word tenants. I don't know if that's correct, but maybe one of the tenants in their building and another one arranged a from beginning to end, a 25 year anniversary trip. Could you just talk about those briefly?

Lynda Ellis: Those are so wonderful and when I referenced the funeral service, Linda, it gives us an opportunity to make a difference in someone else's life. And then during COVID, we were honored to help many families with the parting of their loved one and arranging funeral services for those loved ones.

And it's really hard, as you can well imagine. And it was a wonderful opportunity to make a difference in someone's life that we couldn't shake their hand or see personally, but it was a really hard time and we were able to lighten that load and it was truly a blessing for us to be able to do that.

And in terms of the 25 th anniversary, it was so fun because our client told me he wanted something special, told our concierge he wanted something very special and they went on to an island, they were there for a week and one of the days he wanted a beautiful, beautiful day of sailing.

And so he wanted a specific yacht in terms of the feet of the yacht. He wanted a captain so he wouldn't have to sail it himself. He wanted it catered. He wanted special wines and he wanted breakfast, lunch, and dinner on that yacht by candlelight. It happened, the weather cooperated. It was beautiful weather. And he came back and he said it was the most amazing trip that he and his wife had ever spent. And he said it was wonderful because of what you did. It was so wonderful that, and we don't encourage this, but he actually texted me the next day and said, I want to bring something back for the concierge. And I see some earrings, could I bring those back for her? It was just such a really nice touch, but they felt so wonderful. And it's the memory. It's the memory that we helped create for them, and that's truly an honor to be able to do that.

Linda Ostovitz: Well, you gave me some chills during those two stories, and then I think, my goodness, she even controls the weather. So that's pretty incredible.

So you had worked for Capitol Concierge in management for a number of years before you bought it. So can you give us an idea of the size of the company, what its capacity was, what it was doing when you bought it?

Lynda Ellis: Absolutely. I met our founder, Mary Naylor, and she's one of those people who knows what the market wants before the market wants it. And so she was starting another company and she wanted someone to come in and run Capitol Concierge, and that's something that I have done throughout my career is run companies.

I just sold my second company and I was looking for something different. I was in instructional technology for over 25 years. It was fun. It was good to me, but I wanted something different. And when I came to the company, when I met Mary, I didn't know how to spell concierge. I can do that now. And Mary and I just absolutely matched. Our strengths and our weaknesses complimented one another. We talked from 10 to 10. One day she called me at 11, made me an offer, and the rest is history. And at that time there were 19 people in our corporate office. I don't have that now. Because I believe in very flat organizations, it keeps you close to the client.

And we had at the time, 87 employees and we were only in commercial office properties providing, being the person at the front desk. And so I went to Mary, I said, why don't we go into shopping malls? And she said, yeah, I think that's great. So we did a lot of work in shopping malls. Tyson's Corner Center, Columbia Mall, Towson, malls in Massachusetts, in North and South Carolina and in Texas. And then I wanted to go into residential. Into high-end condominiums. And she said, Lynda, that's a pain. It is a pain, but we love it. It's we, so we are a company 24 by seven by 365. And that's been very good to us. And then I said, we need to provide our service to corporations whose employers value their employees, and how can we make their day better so that the individual employee feels seen and valued? I'm very much a grower, Linda. I get bored if we're not growing. And we just started to grow and in 2007 after trying to sell the company for our board three times, I went to the board and said, why don't I buy it? They said, oh, that's a great idea. I said, yeah, that's a great idea. It depends on the day, whether it's a great idea. And so I went to the company to our employees and said, if you'll come along with me on this journey, we will make this company a national company and then a global company, and we've done that.

We have a company in Ireland. We have a company in the UK. We're all over the United States. It's wherever our client needs us to be. And that has been such a wonderful gift to me personally, both as a business person, but as an entrepreneur. We have over 300 people. We're approaching 400 and it's because of those people, we've been able to grow. Our contracts, we are annual contracts and we have contracts that we've had for 30 years, and that's because we understand you don't win or keep a client when the contract is renewed in a

year. You keep that client every day with every experience, with every touch, with anybody that you see, and that's our standard.

Linda Ostovitz: So it sounds like you had goals of going national, then international, increasing your staff, if you will, going into residential and you've hit every single one of them. So the question any entrepreneur would have, and the one I have certainly that has caused us to be having this discussion is how do you do that?

How do you accomplish those goals? You are not, from my observation, a company that does a lot of advertising or is in social media or billboards. I'm dating myself, I know. But how is it that you have been so successful in what you have accomplished in meeting your goals?

Lynda Ellis: I think a couple of things, Linda. It's our standard. We're very selective how we hire, but it's making every single one of our employees know that not only that they're seen, but they're truly valued and they are a part of this organization. And I talked to them about, it doesn't matter if we have a hundred, 200, 500 employees.

We have one company, one set of standards, one mission. Our values are united together. And so people know, I think being clear to employees what your expectations are, what your vision is. And quite honestly, Linda, it's the people, our employees have made our growth, not me. I'm pretty good at staying out of people's way.

We hire great people and let them do their job and they know they are a part of the team, but there's only one team. We have several hundred concierges, several hundred employees. There's only one team.

Linda Ostovitz: We talked, I think a little bit about, previously, that getting the right employee, especially since that's how you have grown this company, is critical and I remember very clearly you articulating your standard to me a hundred percent, a hundred percent of the time,

Lynda Ellis: Yes.

Linda Ostovitz: And there's a lot of people out there looking for jobs and there's a lot of competition for good employees.

What process do you utilize? How many people do you have to go through to find that next one employee who gets the privilege of working for you?

Lynda Ellis: We're very selective. As I've shared with you we have in-house recruiters, and they're at an average of 34 interviews to find one that we will invite into the company and we are very specific about what we're looking for. There are things that you must bring with you that we can't teach you.

We can teach you how to be a concierge. We can't teach you to be on time every single day. We can't teach you to have a smile on your face when your day is horrible. We can't teach you to hold the door open for someone just because. It's gotta be automatic. And we look for people who genuinely, authentically want to make someone else's day better when their day is horrible.

That's what we look for, and I am the first one up when we do our training, and there's a couple of reasons for that. I want people to know who I am and that I'm accessible to them. Each one of them, every single one of our employees has my cell phone, which is on 24 by seven by 365, but I share with them, here's the edition, here's who we are, these are our values. And I congratulate you. So let's say our training for one day is 10 people 'cause the math is easy. We know that there have been 340 interviews for these 10 people to be in this room. And so I congratulate them for joining the team and thank them for accepting our invitation to join the team because they have choices.

And I always tell them, think about this. 340 people wanted the seat that you're in right now. Think how special you are. I start with a question does everybody here agree with me that there are billions of people on this planet? Billions. And yes, they do. And then I say to them, but you realize there's only one you. Just. One. You. That's how special you are and that's how special our company is. And you've just joined a team of over 300 colleagues. And from the very beginning I want them to feel I, whoever I am, I am important. I also share that we have different jobs. I do a job of trying to create or creating the vision.

They're doing the job of buying into that vision and helping to create the reality of that vision. And they're special. And so I think by helping people feel that they count, they stay. We have very high retention. And I may have shared with you that if you are with us a year, you're gonna be with us five. If you're with us five, you're gonna be with us for a long time. And I have to share with you, I don't know that I've shared this but last Thursday, our president and three of our operations managers hosted three of our employees at a very, very nice dinner, two of which we were celebrating their 20th anniversary with our company, and one of which, on that Thursday night was his 30th anniversary with us.

It's about being a part of something bigger than yourself and that you know that you count because people have choices and they can leave whenever they want,

but they wanna be here. It starts at the very beginning so that they know from the CEO owner to every single other employee, we're all one team and we're together.

Linda Ostovitz: Everybody talks about the importance of what you have just said, and it's not a hard thing to agree to, right? We're one team, we want people to know we're important, but the execution seems to be so hard to accomplish. You've done it. Now, do you have other people at other levels in the organization who you can't meet with 300 people every day.

We understand that, and you're a force of nature. When people are in your presence, they feel everything you just said. But what do you do after you've had the opportunity to share with them or make them recognize how special they are to have that reinforced over time by other people? How does that work?

Lynda Ellis: Because we hire that, we hire people for what they, who they are. What they believe in and their integrity. Those are all characteristics that we look for. You mentioned my a hundred percent of a hundred percent of the time, one of the things I talk a lot about in training, and I'm not doing, I'm only, I think my piece is like 30 minutes and part of it is getting to know the new hires. It's the genuineness of that experience and I share with them, our standard is a hundred percent of a hundred percent of the time, and you have to go way beyond a hundred percent to get noticed in this company. And the reason our floor, the reason our foundation is a hundred percent a hundred percent of the time is how do I go to a client and say, I'm gonna charge you a hundred percent of the fee, but I'm only gonna give you 99%.

Because when I'm a customer, I want a hundred percent of my manicure. I want a hundred percent of my haircut. I want a hundred percent of my maintenance on my car. I don't want 99.9. I paid you a hundred percent. And so many times people it's hard. That's why it's hard for the first year. Because life is what life is.

And we all have challenges where people are sick and I'm really worried about my loved one. They had a horrible diagnosis, just come on or they shared with me, or I have four flat tires. What am I gonna do? When you put your hand on the door of you're building, it is showtime. There are no exceptions, and I'm very clear about that. That goes for whatever. And I don't wanna say levels 'cause I don't believe we have levels in our company. We have different jobs in our company. So whether you are in the corporate office, you're a part-timer. We have 70 over, I think we're about 70 on-call people, that there's only one standard. And I share with them, if you get into this company, it's not what you

thought it would be, or it's not what you wanna do, because I'm a really staunch believer and you should be doing something that you enjoy. If it's not what you want, tell us. We'll help you find something else. Doesn't make you a bad person. It means we're the wrong company for your career. So it's just hiring, whether that's our accountant, our director of our accounting, our hr, our any of the facets of our operation, they've been hired exactly the same way. And they are held accountable for exactly the same things. It's one of the things and I've been some of my entrepreneurial friends have really challenged me on this.

Our org chart is a bit different. I'm on the bottom. Concierges are on the top. The reason they're up on top is they're the ones who are in front of the customer. I'm not, and I share with them the reason our org chart is that way is I have one job, just one. And that's to support them. So when you visualize that org chart and I'm on the bottom, I'm supporting those folks and we do a lot to reinforce. It's really important that we support one another without even thinking about, it's just what we do.

Linda Ostovitz: I think that employers across the board are trying to be creative and certainly cost conscious while still supporting their people and letting their people know that, that we support them and so forth. What works for you in terms of, again, on a continuing basis, showing your folks, reminding their folks that they are the key to the success of this company, that they're supported and that they're appreciated.

Lynda Ellis: I think transparency. Things happen in businesses. I'll give you a great example. A few years ago we had a situation, I won't name the company. But our payroll didn't hit, and I got a call about 5:30 in the morning that the payroll hadn't hit. Turns out end of the story, it's a positive, but at the end of the story is when the payroll company sent the money however, that's done, they left one of the numbers out. It was a human error. I get it. But it was scary because a lot of our people, like many others live paycheck to paycheck. And so I came in to the office and I had gathered the team and I said, I'm gonna send an email out. And a couple of people on the team, on the corporate team said, well, wait, we don't know what we're doing. We don't know what the resolution is yet, and I said, I know that, but you think they're not gonna know that the money is not in their account? I wanna get to them. I sent them an email and I said, I have no idea what happened. I know that you guys have gotta be scared. I am concerned about this.

I will manage, we're gonna manage through this. If you have any things that hit and you're gonna have fees, we'll pay those fees will be paid for. And I will be back to you at 10 o'clock this morning to let you know where we're at and

update you. Without exception, Linda, every single email that I received back was Lynda, we know you and it always i'm so grateful for this. Every single email was, Lynda, we know you have our back. We'll take care of the client while you're taking care of us. You can't ask for more than that. You can't buy that. You have to show that you have to be transparent. Things happen. We had another situation where again, it was a situation with payroll. I just went and said, Hey guys, this is what happened. And I told them what we were gonna do. It's just being honest. It's being transparent, and it's caring enough to communicate. And quite honestly, I'm singing to the choir here, but you wanna handle the narrative.

People are gonna make up whatever they wanna make up. If they don't know what the facts are. If they don't know what's going on, they're gonna, they're gonna make up a story. I want that to be a real story.

Linda Ostovitz: And often those stories they make up are worse than what the reality is, right? Because then it takes on a life of its own. And I don't know I have come to learn with each growing year that I've been doing what I'm doing, which now numbers 44, that everything is about relationships and obviously you have a relationship with each of your employees and there is a trust there that's been cultivated that starts with everybody knowing the expectations and meeting them and having open discussions about what they are.

So yay you for that and everything else you've done.

Lynda Ellis: Well, Linda, like you've done you're a leader in your career and in your field, and it's caring enough to make people know that they're seen. I just can't, I know companies struggle with this, but I don't, maybe it's because I like people. I don't know. I genuinely like people I think we're extraordinarily interesting animals.

But I'm reminded of times where I've had to sever a relationship, and I may have mentioned this to you. I just got one yesterday, one of the employees that I had to sever the relationship because I believe you know that I believe I don't fire anybody. You fire yourself. I don't wanna come to this party.

You brought me here. This person sent me the cutest little meme or whatever they're called, yesterday is hump day. I hope you're having a great day. I terminated her. It's letting people know who you are and that you genuinely care. And I've said to people, Hey, I can fire you. It's not personal. Let's go have lunch.

It didn't work out, didn't work out because you didn't adhere to our standards and you don't breathe the value system that we have in our company. You gotta breathe it, you gotta be it, and it's not kind of, sort of, maybe sometimes it's a hundred percent of a hundred percent of the time and that your, that you understand in this company, it is not a risk to screw something up. Where the risk comes in is you hide it, you hide it, you're dead. You let us know, we're gonna help you. But, and I share with people, if you hide it, you took away my runway. I can't help you. We've had serious situations where somebody will call me and they're like, Lynda, Lynda what's going on, and they tell me and we, we solve it together. It's kind of relationship that we make with our clients. Our clients. We've had, as I mentioned, for years and I, it's because every single day we have to earn it and we know we have to earn it.

Linda Ostovitz: That leads me to something else that we had talked about, which is how do you get more clients and your very direct and simple answer to me was listen to them and your clients will tell you how to get more clients. Why don't you share what you meant by that?

Lynda Ellis: Is I have this, my team, I've heard them say. Okay, be careful 'cause Lynda's gonna get the duct tape out. It's, you gotta shut up and listen. You have to listen to hear, don't listen to respond, listen to hear someone. And I often will say, if you're talking 20% of the time, you're talking 10% of the time too much.

What are you talking for? Shut up and listen to what the person is saying. What are they thinking? How are they feeling? You wanna develop the relationship with a person, so you establish a level of trust that can grow and you also can hear, oh my gosh, this is what's going on for them.

How could I help them? And so you help them whether or not it means business for you that day or that moment. Down the pike, they're gonna remember, you know what, I was talking to Lynda and she told me she has a concierge service and I think you ought to call her. It's all as you started, Linda, it's relationships.

It is, and it's just, I know, you know, grew up with something nice, just as nice to do and be accountable for your own decisions. For your own consequences because we're human and we screw up. But if we screw up, we are mock speed to the client to say, we really messed this up. Here's what we're doing.

We wanna know, we wanna partner with you to make it okay. Because when you think about it, what we do, we're brought in by property management companies. They have customers and our job is to serve their customers,

whether they're called tenants or residents, and sometimes we have high maintenance people that we serve and that puts the property manager in the middle.

So we have a number of customers, if you will, that need different things at different times, and you just, you have to be intentional about wanting to make somebody else's day better and solving the problem.

Linda Ostovitz: There is this quote. I don't, I'm not even sure who said it, but I don't remember what you said, but I remember how you made me feel.

Lynda Ellis: Yes.

Linda Ostovitz: And it sounds to me like you have cultivated Lynda this team of individuals who are focused on how do I make my tenants or residents, whatever it is, feel better by something I was able to do for them no matter how large or how small, right?

And you, it's probably hard to measure how large or how small. Because you can say hello or touch somebody's arm, and if they're having a miserable day, it might just be enough to make 'em feel better for that moment.

Lynda Ellis: That's so true. Is something that we talk about. Yeah. An example I give to our employees is, have you ever been walking down the street and somebody smiles at you and says, good afternoon and you say, oh yeah, good afternoon. Fine. Did you walk away thinking that's an idiot, or did you walk away feeling better? Really simple.

Linda Ostovitz: I totally agree, totally.

Lynda Ellis: It's, it is, how did you make me feel? What is special? And to your point, Linda, there are so many stories that we have where the concierge has made a difference in someone's life. I remember one of our concierges, she's retired now Betty and I was in the building visiting, and I was with Betty and she introduced me to this person and the person said to me, I am so happy to meet you because I want you to know how special Betty is. That when my husband was sick, Betty was there and Betty knew when to talk to me and not talk to me, and Betty helped me. She would help me when I cried and she would help me with my fear. That's what we do.

Linda Ostovitz: So I just got chills again for about the 10th time during this conversation, quite frankly.

Clearly you are an amazing business woman, but you were also a very generous woman and business who is engaged with her community and believes in giving back and being a participant at all levels. Would you share with us the ways that you are involved in that way, and what does that do for you personally?

Lynda Ellis: I am Irish. My father was born and raised in Belfast, and he raised me to give back to the community. That wasn't a question. It was, that's what we do. And so from the time I, I remember going into hospitals when I was 12 to talking to patients. And it is, you can never, ever give as much as you get.

You can't. It's impossible, and it's just creating a smile in somebody else's face and just knowing that you were able to make somebody else's day better is really special. You can't buy it. It's not for sale. So I've always been involved and I've been very, very, very involved in the Red Cross in a member of the Tiffany Circle.

And I was chair of the Tiffany Circle, which is the philanthropic women within Red Cross. 'Cause I lived in, I was married in Japan and our daughter was born in Japan and I learned over there so many wonderful lessons. And because we were not military I couldn't get a job initially and I volunteered with the Red Cross and I saw how wonderful that organization with all of its faults, with all of the stuff that you hear about that organization is so really special because it's making a difference.

It's helping people. And so I've always been involved with the Red Cross. I am on the, I've been on the board of the trustees for my alma mater, my university. I'm now chair and I'm in the chamber with Hugh. I mean, who would not like that? I'm on the legislative committee and for all of your listeners who are listening, please get involved in what's happening in our state, and involved with what's going on in the school district, but your vote counts, your presence counts. And that's so, so important because we have to help one another. I actually, one of the things that we really, it's a fun thing for those of your listeners who are familiar with McGruff the Crime Fighting Dog that is the National Council Crime Prevention Council, and I'm chair of that board.

And because we're relaunching the awareness of McGruff, the Crime-fighting Dog. We're really fighting against all of the deaths of fentanyl and counterfeit drugs. I'm so proud of the work we're doing, but it gives me a chance to make a difference on a different level.

I also am very involved in my, my church on several committees. It gives you the gift of making a difference in lives. So it really is self-serving, I have to say.

I've had many conversations with many people about, I feel guilty because it is very selfish. How can you make somebody else's day better?

How can you create a smile on somebody else's face and not feel good about yourself and not feel good? Oh my gosh. Not that you're so aware of it consciously, but you feel good, and how can you not want more of that?

Linda Ostovitz: It is a feel good thing to do. There's no question about it. And I know you also, you've talked about some of the things you've done to give back, but I know you also mentor yo younger entrepreneurs, I guess is the right way to put it and share with them the benefit of your experiences. And while I think every mentor mentee relationship is different, 'cause obviously you're dealing with different people at different places, you did share with me that there are sort of a list I wrote anyway, of things that you tell your mentees and people that you help throughout your life every day for how to grow. But what do you tell them? What do you tell our people who are listening to us how to grow?

Lynda Ellis: You gotta start out with a vision. You have to start out with what you wanna do. And you have to lean into that. You have to know, you have to bet on yourself. You can't be fearful. If it was easy, everybody would be doing it right. And I encourage them to have the faith that they genuinely have, the faith they need to have in themselves. They're betting on themselves. I think it's really important for any entrepreneur, but especially for people just getting started. I just met with a couple this morning, two wonderful individuals, and it's about what is your vision? What are you doing, what do you want? And then putting that in place and doing it legitimately doing it authentically and believing in yourself. And I may have shared with you about our Buffalo Culture. I'm not sure that we talked about that, but do you know that the buffalo is the only animal on earth that runs into a storm? You know why they do that? You get through the storm sooner.

Think about that. Why would you not wanna lean into the storm?

Linda Ostovitz: Like swallowing the frog, right?

Lynda Ellis: Yes, yes, exactly. You lean into things and you listen to others, you seek out other business people and hear what they're saying. Shut up and listen again. It's amazing how many people wanna talk rather than listen and you learn such wonderful things.

And do not be afraid to fail. Every failure is a lesson to make you stronger, to help you grow, to help you do what you wanna do, to accomplish the things you want to accomplish.

Linda Ostovitz: What is your advice consistent with all of what you've just shared in terms of a strategic plan and how far out it should go? How do we execute it? How about that?

Lynda Ellis: So thank you. I appreciate that.

Linda Ostovitz: You're welcome.

Lynda Ellis: I used to be five year strategic plans. I don't do those anymore. It's three years and I do it's only three years, and you're lucky if you get three years because time, everything goes so fast. You've gotta sit down, develop your strategic plan, know what you're gonna do, and the specifics to that because one of the things, putting things down on paper.

Or I guess in the computer you think, oh my gosh, I have to do that. Yeah, you do. Or you'll learn that I've got gaps. And embrace the gaps. Figure that out, and then adhere to your plan and be willing to, for that to be somewhat fluid. Because if something doesn't work, it's not a failure. It means that you've gotta go a different way.

The plans are so important, and I will say that if you don't have a plan, how are you gonna get there? Where are you gonna go? And it's a lot of things. I've been blessed in my career to have a lot of luck and a lot of blessings. But without a plan, I wouldn't have had that luck. I wouldn't have had those blessings.

And you have to know that it's you. It is you, you are it. And you have to be willing to accept that. You have to understand and intimately know there are gonna be a lot of missed birthdays. There's gonna be a, and it doesn't matter if you're a man or woman. There's gonna be a lot of things that you have to do.

But if you've got that plan and you live the plan, you're gonna make it. Even though the plan may change in six months because something happened, it's, you may get a new competitor like AI is a competitor to us. Okay, well I didn't know that 10 years ago, even though AI was being developed. So what do we do now?

And honestly, I think and I may have shared this with you, Linda, one of the number one things is you have to have fun. If it ain't fun. If you got this life, and why would you not enjoy living your life doing what you wanna do?

Linda Ostovitz: What a fabulous way to wrap up this wonderful conversation with you. Lynda Ellis, it has been a privilege. I got to talk to you today, and just so anybody knows, I don't do this cold. I would never put anybody in that position. So we always have a conversation before the conversation, so we make sure we pull out all the best nuggets and cover everything that we ought to cover.

So twice I've gotten to have this conversation with you in versions of it. It's a privilege. I admire you so much and I'm very thankful for all that you've brought to the chamber, to the business life that I'm engaged in, into my personal life. So thank you for all of that.

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Lynda, thank you again. It's been a privilege. Very much appreciate you joining us today.

Lynda Ellis: Thank you. It's an honor.