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## Face to Face With... Dayna Steele, Founder, Steele Media Services

by Christine Hall

As one of the top female rock-and-roll DJs in the United States, Dayna Steele reigned for years as Houston's "First Lady of Radio" with her knack for conducting entertaining celebrity interviews, an insider's track on the local and national entertainment scene and a commitment to excellence in radio and television. She then went on to be a businesswoman, creating both The Space Store, the world's largest space-related e-commerce venture, and Steele Media Services, a media consulting and marketing firm. Her latest projects include Smart Girls Rock, an online community to encourage girls to make "smart the new cool" and Operation National Anthem, a series of free videos of U.S. soldiers serving in Iraq offered to venues throughout the country to play before the singing of the national anthem. Steele now spends her time reliving her rock-and-roll days through a motivational keynote speech, "Find Your Inner Rock Star." Steel was interviewed by HBJ reporter Christine Hall.



Q: How can a businessperson go about finding their inner rock star?

A: First, you have to make sure you are doing something you really love. Passion helps get you through the lean times, repetitive tasks, unpleasant experience — in my case, disco — and should lead you to want to learn everything you can about your business. That passion will also give you confidence to try new things and take risks.

Q: What suggestions do you give people for building a foundation for their life or business?

A: Passion is first and foremost. Followed by knowledge, networking and appreciation. Learn not only about your business, but also read everything you can get your hands on, watch the news, read a paper, pick up magazines — knowledge is power. And, most importantly, knowledge gives you the ability to recognize opportunity. Find out what other people want and need and help them out without expecting anything in return. And really listen to what people are saying around you. Last, but not least, be sure to say thank you to everyone along the way — above you, below you and beside you. Even for the smallest thing, say thank you or, even better, write a note.

Q: Why do you think some rock bands have lasted?

A: Quality product, great branding and marketing and a very strong work ethic. That and they all have the same foundation I mentioned above — passion, knowledge, networking and appreciation. One of the reasons I wrote "Rock to the Top" was that I got tired of hearing people say "I wish I was famous so I didn't have to work for a living." These people work harder, longer and smarter than anyone I have ever met.

Q: What can rock stars teach us about running a business?

A: That it's OK to love what you do, but to be successful it all comes down to you and hard work. There is no easy way. And as your business grows, don't just delegate and walk away. Be aware of what's going on, the quality of your product, how customers are being treated, where the money is going. Pay attention each and every day. You don't have to micromanage your people but you can't play dumb either. Mick Jagger is the CEO of The Rolling Stones. He has people to run the business but he knows where every penny is going and has final say in everything they do from the music to the tour to the branding. Gene Simmons is the same way with KISS.

Q: What's next for you?

A: I plan to write another book focusing on networking. And there is my speaking career. I have found that to be my next passion in life. I enjoy speaking to groups across the country in industries across-the-board, motivating participants to work hard, work smart and have fun with it. Life is much too short to not have fun. And if you make money along the way, all the better!