



Ray Hutch

CEO Synergy Global Solutions

"If you don't set goals for yourself, you are doomed to work to achieve the goals of someone else."

Anonymous

Ray Hutch is an individual who learned very early on the value of hard work, or as he puts it, that he was in control of his own destiny.

When he was 12 years old, Ray became enamored with the notion of owning a racing bike. His parents were receptive to the idea, but knowing that it would make him value the possession quite a bit more and consider the purchase more carefully, they told him that he had to raise the money himself. Inspired by ads in the back of the comic books that he so loved to read, he discovered how to make a profit by acting as a door to door salesman for business cards and stationery. Ray signed up with the company and went to work, and within one year he had raised the money necessary to purchase the bike of his dreams. Reflecting on this experience, Ray learned how to run a small business.

Despite his early success with sales, Ray really had no idea what he wanted to do with his life, except that he had no real desire to sell life insurance as his father did. In his last days of high school he spoke with a guidance counselor, who looked over his academic records and advised him to become

an engineer. At the time, Ray had no idea what an engineer even was, but having no better ideas himself decided to follow the counselor's suggestion and went on to Cornell University. After spending some time there, however, he realized he was merely "wasting his time" and had no real interest in the material being covered. He moved back closer to home, and finished his education at Trinity College, graduating in 1963. Soon thereafter, he took a job with IBM, but due to obligations from both the military and his family, he was unable to devote the time and attention that the demanding career required and they let him go. Convinced that the problem was with his lack of a real interest in the field of engineering, he asked them for a transfer to the sales department, but the company ultimately declined.

Feeling somewhat defeated and still not certain of what he wanted to do with his life, Ray took a job with Travelers Insurance Company. Though he had been certain earlier that this was an industry he definitely didn't want to enter, he stayed there while his wife, Erika, finished school. He asked Travelers to send him to a small city, so that he could raise his family in a community small enough that they would feel they could really make a difference there. Travelers instead ended up sending him to Chicago, of all places. Ray soon took another job with a company in the information systems business and was transferred to Rochester. There, he finally found the close-knit but modern community that he had been longing for. However, the company soon sold out, and the acquiring company wanted Ray to move to a larger city, while he wanted to stay in a small town to raise his family.

It was at this point that Ray recalled the success he'd had raising the money for his bike as a child, and resolved that once again he would become the master of his own fate. In his own words:

"I wanted to control my own destiny. I realized that, having been moved around by GE, IBM, Travelers... none of them had fulfilled my goals. The only way I could control my own destiny was to work for myself, to own my own business."

Determined to create the life he wanted for himself and his family, Ray decided to open his own business. He knew his strong point lay in sales, but in an effort to differentiate himself and create his own niche, he wanted to combine that with the technical expertise he had learned in college and from working at IBM. Therefore, the business he established was one that resold access to university mainframe server computers for private use when they weren't being used. This at a time when owning a computer was well beyond the reach of most people. In fact, when Ray bought his own computer for use in his business, it cost him nearly \$100,000, probably the equivalent to a million dollar machine in today's terms.

For the first 18 months, Ray focused on building up his business. He lived off savings and didn't take a salary during that entire period. What kept him going was the knowledge that he was in control of everything that was happening and that he could do it where he wanted: in the small community of Rochester, where he really felt he and his family could make a difference.

Ray's business was a success. By combining his salesmanship with his niche expertise, he was able to provide a service that no one else was offering, and his business began to grow by leaps and bounds. When 1987 rolled around and the price of personal computers began to drop to affordable levels, Ray wasn't caught off-guard; he simply altered the nature of his business, to sell the machines themselves and integrated this with software and network services. Once again, he was capitalizing both on his skills and on his knowledge.

Having achieved such great success, Ray is living the life he's always wanted to live, bringing up his family in a community where they try to make all the difference they can. And make a difference they do. Ray tries to give back to the community of Rochester in any way he can. One way he's done this is through once again exploiting his passions and personal interests. An avid swimmer in his spare time, Ray funded the non-profit organization QUAD A and the Eastside YMCA, to teach local children how to swim. Since its

inception, that organization has taught more than 3000 kids to swim, improving the quality of their lives.

The story of Ray's turning point is a simple one, but its power lies in that simplicity.

As Ray has shown, the value of a single moment in one's youth cannot be underestimated, nor the power of combining one's true talents with the technical demands of the marketplace and the time one lives in.

By simply doing what he loves and what he is good at, Ray has achieved his goals and made himself the master of his own destiny.