

DICK KAPLAN

CEO of Pictometry



- ◆ Dick Kaplan started on the wrong foot; he got pulled back in elementary school for two years and was kicked out of high school three times.
- ◆ He managed to get into Monroe Community College and transferred to the University at Buffalo after getting his grades up for two years.

- ◆ At the age of 29, his brother, who had helped his father run their family company's carpeting business, died of cancer and Dick felt obliged to drop out of school to help his parents get back on their feet at home.

◆ TURNING POINT:

When Dick returned home, he realized his family's financial situation was more dire than he had expected. His father had spent almost all their savings and when Dick went to the bank to get a loan, he met a loan officer who would change his view on being successful in business from there forward.

- ◆ The loan officer made Dick realize how important reputation was, and was initially lenient on lending the company money.
- ◆ *"However, I'm going to lend you the money because I know your father. If you're anything like him, I know I'm not going to regret it."*
- ◆ Dick worked hard at his father's business and successfully turned things around. He continued to realize the positive impression that his father's reputation had had upon the community and vowed to live up to it.

- ◆ Equally influential, Chuck Mills, a friend of Dick's, told him that "*if you're going to work, do something with a huge potential*".
- ◆ He was inspired to found the Maxim Group, which became a collection of Dick's businesses that were each involved in different aspects of the carpet industry.
- ◆ Eventually, the Maxim Group became a public company on the New York Stock Exchange.

Earning a reputation of turning small businesses around, investors at Pictometry, an Aerial Imaging Company, asked Dick to come in and turn their operations around. This became a huge success for him and he was named the CEO of Pictometry later on.

LAUREN DIXON

CEO of Dixon Schwabl




Dixon Schwabl

ADVERTISING | MARKETING | PUBLIC RELATIONS




Background: *Lauren Dixon*

Born and raised in a small town of 200 people, Lauren Dixon was instilled with the values of a strong work ethic and the importance of charity.



Starting out small, Dixon launched her career in advertising by setting up interviews with individuals from ten large businesses, ten mid-sized businesses, and ten small businesses.





She asked each of them a set of questions, designed to give her a critical perspective of how the business of advertising was perceived from the side of the companies that pay for it.



The results from her interview turned out to be almost the same with every businessperson. No matter how much or how little success the person had, Lauren heard the same answers repeated back at her over and over again.

Every interviewee said the same things they hated about working with advertising agencies: **they charged too much for production, they didn't care about the businesses they were working for, and their actual fees were always far in excess of their estimates.**






Desperation

In April of 1987, Lauren was 31 years old and going through a divorce with two young children. She and her husband battled for custody of their kids and Lauren was legally only allowed to move within a 75 mile radius to find a new job... Coincidentally, Lauren signed an agreement saying she wouldn't take a job with a new company within a 75 mile radius that same year.


Suddenly, Lauren found herself with **no job, no goals** with her new profession, and **two small children to take care of**. Her father led her in the direction of starting her own business, and she learned from the people she interviewed.





“These three things that
they dislike with a
passion can be my points
of differentiation.”

Lauren Dixon



Lauren got started and deposited the entirety of her savings, **\$22.11**, into a business account and set out to get a loan.

She came into contact with a local accountant, Jim Cohen, who informed her that 94% of businesses fail within their first year, and 96% of those that make it that far fail the following year.

Determined to succeed in her new career,
Lauren structured her business plan
around Jim's advice and commenced her
business successfully.



The proof of Lauren's success came in 1989, when she and her partner, new husband Mike Schwabl were awarded the distinction of being placed among the top 25 small businesses to work for in the United States.





Today, not having forgotten her small-town roots, Lauren Dixon and her employees have given back 2800 hours of their time to charities in the community. She attributes her corporation's success to her skills in team-building, her focus on employees, and of course her commitment to fulfilling the niche established by less thoughtful competitors.