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# Your Business Matters

October 2021

# Adventures in America's National Parks

## Why It's So Hard for Me to Pick a Favorite

I recently learned that October is the best time of year to visit America's national parks. That got me thinking about which national park (NP) of those that I've visited would be my favorite. Being outdoors in nature is my "happy place," and I love so many different outdoor spaces that I'm not sure I can even pick a favorite.

One of the reasons that our national parks are so spectacular is because they each have unique aspects that make them unlike any other place in our country and, often, the world. After all, that's why millions of people flock to visit them every year, right?

I've had the chance to visit a few (but definitely not enough) of our country's diverse national parks over the course of my life. Being a Florida resident, I've visited Everglades NP (with a small sailboat). It's an amazing place that you can only go to during the winter (otherwise you'll be on the insect menu). Everglades NP offers a glimpse into Florida's past. It's remote and quiet, and there's some amazing fishing. Now that I'm thinking about it, I have to go again with my kayak.

As cool as Everglades NP is, the granddaddy of the east is Great Smoky Mountains NP. I've been there more than any other park. My girls and I learned to whitewater kayak near there about five years ago. That was when I noticed that they were a lot better at it than I was! And, of course, we went whitewater rafting too. Along with the water sports, there's a lot of great hiking, like the walk to the awe-inspiring views from Clingman's Dome and the rugged, rigorous trail to Cataloochee in the southeast part of the park.

Of course, you can't talk about national parks without mentioning some of the most famous ones. I've been to Grand Canyon NP, and that was awe inspiring. My youngest daughter and I watched sunrise from the rim at a very chilly 32 degrees! And the whole family — including Faith, who is not a fan of heights — hiked down a steep trail with amazing views and vertical drop offs just off the edge of the trail.

As incredible as many of the national parks are, one downside is that everyone knows about them. That means that, instead of exploring serene, peaceful wilderness, you're often battling crowds. Some parks have less traffic than others, like Olympic NP in Washington State. The beaches there were unlike any you'll find on the East Coast, and the view of the Strait of San Juan de Fuca and Mt. Olympus from Hurricane Ridge is unreal. And the kayaking was like none I'd ever done before, with sea life all around you as you paddled.

I'm going to let you in on a little secret I have for getting away from the crowds at parks. I read that most people will only venture 1,500–2,000 feet from their cars in any wilderness location. So, getting away from them isn't that hard — just get away from the parking lots and roads. If you go about a mile or so out on a trail (as long as it isn't paved), you'll find more natural beauty and less people.

There are a lot of national parks on my bucket list, including most notably Glacier NP in Montana. Going to the Sun Road — the road that traverses the park and an engineering marvel — opens in the early spring for bicycle only travel. The road is steep, but the views (based on pictures others have taken) are amazing, and I want to give it a ride soon. When you tour a national park in a car, you don't see half of what you get to see touring it by bike.

In any case though, whatever mode of transportation suits you, it is definitely worth your time to visit some of our national parks!

*-Ed Alexander*

# 3 Hiring Rules All Businesses Need Right Now

Hiring can be a difficult prospect, but there is no sugarcoating it: **Hiring is really hard right now.** Remote work has widened the field of available applicants for many industries, but it's also narrowed the availability for other industries, like restaurants and factories. Meanwhile, workers are staging a revolution of sorts, demanding certain lifestyle perks never before seen in the workforce.

However, you're not staring into an abyss without a parachute. There are tried-and-true methods — and a few new necessary ones — you can use to ensure you hire the right candidate the first time, allowing your businesses to build like never before.

**First, set a few non-negotiables.** These are qualities, salary ranges, and skills you need every applicant in your hiring process to possess. For example, if you need someone who can run a specialty machine on your floor, you shouldn't look to hire someone who only has office clerking skills. You can teach some things on the job — like Excel or phone etiquette — but other things have to come with certifications, previous experience, and degrees.

(***Pro Tip:*** Always look at the salary listed! If someone is asking for compensation that's completely above what you can offer, weed them out of your applicant group. This is an easy way to eliminate prospects. However, be open to negotiations.)

**Then, find the people who fit your culture — not the other way around**. This can be difficult with workforces entering a more global stage, but it's nowhere near impossible. Be honest about what your employee culture looks like and narrow down candidates from there. ***Remember***, the most talented candidate with the worst attitude can kill your culture and spell disaster for your business.

Ask your employees for help, too! Ask about the ideal traits they want in a coworker or arrange for second interviews as meet-and-greets to "test" the functionality of your team with your potential employee. Keep these second interviews light, as they are not so much about the skills the candidate possesses as they are about the attitude they bring to the team.

**Finally, train them right.** This is often a forgotten part of the hiring process. Training new employees is just as important as finding the right candidate to hire. Employee churn is an expensive cost, and unless you equip your new employees with the right tools — and continue to train your team — you are going to keep incurring this cost. You're hiring to keep employees and build a business. When you train an employee right, you get an employee for life. (Or at least long enough to hold value!)

***Bonus:*** Get feedback! When you're the boss, it's hard to remember what it was like on the other side of the hiring table. Ask your newest employees about your hiring and training process. What did they like? What was missing? These answers can help you refine your process!


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# HAVE A *Laugh*

## The Deadliest Surgery in History

### *By the 'Fastest Knife in the West End'*

If you needed surgery in the early 1800s, it could be a death sentence. Before anesthesia, patients were awake and lucid the entire time.

One of this era's greatest surgeons, Dr. Robert Liston, was named the "fastest knife in the West End" because he was known for performing surgeries very quickly. One fateful day, Dr. Liston cut through his patient's broken, infected leg with incredible speed — so incredible that he didn't realize he had cut off two of his assistant's fingers, too. The patient and assistant later died of gangrene.

But theirs were not the only deaths that day. In those days, people found amputations morbidly entertaining. When Dr. Liston grabbed one of his knives, he whipped it too closely to one spectator, slicing through his coat. While he didn't actually break the man's skin, the spectator thought he'd been stabbed and died of shock.

Today, it's the only known surgery with a 300% mortality rate.

# *Tap Into a Successful CEO's Mind*

## How 'The Outsiders' Provides an Unconventional Road Map

What if you could harness the knowledge and skill possessed by some of the world's top CEOs — specifically eight of them? With investment expert and author William N. Thorndike Jr.'s "The Outsiders: Eight Unconventional CEOs and Their Radically Rational Blueprint for Success," you can.

After years of analyzing investments and the companies behind meteoric climbs on Wall Street, Thorndike has compiled stories, lessons, and tactics used by eight CEOs whose methods and beliefs don't mirror those of other leaders — unconventional leaders like Virgin Group Founder Richard Branson or SpaceX and Tesla CEO Elon Musk, whose companies' growth speaks volumes for their methodology.

Thorndike examines the successes of various business leaders, like pet food company Ralston Purina's CEO or Berkshire Hathaway's top leader, to discover what makes these companies so successful, even as they quietly grow. Through his storytelling and deep-dive into the mindsets of these CEOs, Thorndike offers readers various perspectives on a different way to amass success. Thorndike also illuminates how many of these top business minds were quietly outpacing their loud, celebrity-like counterparts.

For example, frugality is a major component of their success, while most others view a singular metric as the biggest determining factor in their company's long-term success. Together, many of these top CEOs often value the human elements of their business, attributing the people they have working for them as one of the most important parts of their company growth.

As you read through the various lessons and experiences of these CEOs, you find models emerging. Some of the tactics may work for you, while others prove that unconventional methods were never out of the box to begin with. All told, Thorndike's "The Outsiders" is a reminder that sometimes the quiet ones make the most progress.

*You can learn more about Thorndike's book at Goodreads.com, or you can find it on Amazon.com or your favorite bookstore.*

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# The Sales Power of the Introvert

When we think of careers suited for extroverts, sales often springs to mind. After all, nothing could be more exhausting to an introvert than having to talk to dozens of people every day and maintain a positive demeanor to seal every deal.

However, a surprising study by the Harvard Business Review (HBR) disputes this belief.

The HBR reports that being an extrovert had no impact on a salesperson's ability to sell; in fact, some of the negative qualities of being an extrovert, such as bravado and overt friendliness, are more likely to alienate customers. On the flip side, humility and modesty were two traits possessed by those who were 90% better than other sales people in their company. Interestingly, these traits often accompany an introverted personality.

The reason, as Entrepreneur.com reports, is actually fairly simple. Being effective at sales does not require a profound skill for speaking or storytelling. Instead, salespeople need to be great *listeners*. This attention to detail and attentiveness to their subject is often found in introverts.

Now, that doesn't make extroverts bad at sales. Instead, you can harness the power of the introvert and spread the wealth among your sales team by doing the following:

1. **Establish Trust:** Introverts have a powerful ability to connect one-on-one with whoever they are speaking to. They thrive on personal conversations, wherein they can build a rapport with one or two other people rather than a group. This trait is necessary for salespeople to acquire, as it makes prospects feel safe and heard.

2. **Ask Questions:** A long spiel about a product or service is overwhelming, especially when the person providing it feels like a total stranger. Before launching into a pitch, an introverted salesperson knows to ask questions, begging the prospect to lead the conversation and push the salesperson into the appropriate action for a sale.

3. **Keep It Relational:** People remember stories. They want to hear stories of success and failures, often applying the lessons from those stories to their own lives. Introverts can captivate an audience — maybe that's why so many introverts are also authors — and salespeople have to strike that balance between sharing stories and listening.

*For more guidance on how introverts can maximize a sales team, pick up Matthew Pollard's book, "The Introvert's Edge."*


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