





ONE MORE[®]

**Secrets to Win Big[®] from
13 Restaurant Leaders**

ARJUN SEN

Wow One More®: Secrets to Win Big® from 13 Restaurant Leaders

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DEDICATION

Sudhir Verma

You came into my life as a neighbor
Became my best friend and big brother
Shared a lifetime of wisdom and inspiration
But then left us, all too soon
You inspired me with the way you lived every day
to Wow everyone around you.
You are the only person I know who never has a bad day.
You truly epitomized a living positive attitude.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My heartfelt thanks to each one of you to make this book a reality

Blaine Hurst, Tom Ryan, Lane Cardwell, Steve Provost, Bob Bafundo, Tom Cole, William Espey, David Flanery, Michael Haith, Randy Miller, Mike Speck, and Larry Zwain.

There is a common thread of “I genuinely care” in the conversations I had with each of you. Mega leaders like you do not fake it till they make it. Instead, you care about your team, your customers, and your brand from day one and acted on it. It is your actions that have resulted in a lifetime of career success. Thank you all for this opportunity for creating a hall of fame style book that will offer readers diversity of thought but still hit on the same basic building blocks essential for sustained wins.

My Amazing Daughter Raka Sen

Thank you, baby, for your wisdom. You planted the seed of “A successful journey is all about touching one more person” and that seed evolved to Wow One More. See, now there will be a book because of you.

Chitra Sen, My Wife

I love waking up every morning to see you smile, I love the moments we share during the day. I am fortunate that you chose me to “Wow” everyday in our life together.

Clint McCaskill, Head of Operations at ZenMango

Thank you, Clint for making every step of the journey better. This was another proof of “Clint can do anything he wants to do” and I was fortunate to have the best seat to experience it. Thank you for also being an amazing friend and a believer in me.

My family and friends

Thank you. I am grateful for you and your continuous encouragement and support, even in trying times.



INTRODUCTION

The biggest thing I can brag about in my career is the opportunity to work with some fascinating people, and together we won big. During the days as the VP of Marketing and Operations at Papa John's, I worked with the founder John Schnatter who lived focus every day, our President Blaine Hurst who saw the potential in every person better than anyone else, our CFO David Flanery who was a super CFO, got it that his role was to create the path for a business win, Mary Ann Palmer who was versatile to lead Training, HR and Legal, Chris Sternberg, a breakthrough PR strategist and many other leaders.

I got to work with Deborah Topcik who joined fresh out of college with a 10-out-of-10 positive attitude, Gary Brunsman who was head of Customer Service who never gave up, John Johnson who saw IT to be just a path to provide the brand strategic advantage, and Kristy Jones, a former restaurant manager who helped our entire team stay grounded and focused on what mattered. And then there was Donna Thompson who greeted me with a big smile on day one and made me realize I made the right decision to move to Louisville, Kentucky. These are just a few of the amazing team at Papa John's. I worked with similarly incredible people at every position I have held.

When I reflect back, I realize it is the synergy of people that creates the culture of a brand and takes it to never-before-seen success. Since starting my consulting, my journey was enriched by Clint McCaskill, who can take any project to completion; Cody Roper, a brilliant mind who saw the end goal from anywhere and everywhere; my amazing daughter Raka Sen who always is the champion of breakthrough thinking and my amazing wife Chitra Sen, who sees potential in every person and adds a unique perspective to Human Resources. I have worked with clients who wake up every morning and want to change the world with their business. So, you see I have worked with interesting people who have interesting businesses, and I get to help them do interesting things to grow their business. My podcast Secrets to Win Big® is simply an extension of the journey of connecting with amazing people, learning and partnering with them; in the podcast I get to interview fascinating and creative people, strategic thinkers whose knowledge and expertise are helping others every day.

So I thought, why not combine the two? What about a book featuring these experts, and sharing their expertise with a whole new audience? But how would I narrow down the list? I've been fortunate to interview more than a hundred of these thought leaders.

And then it hit me. The restaurant industry was my first love, where it all started and where I've spent the most time, both in my marketing & management career, and as a consultant, which I am passionate about, and which is just plain fun to be in. What could be a better focus for this book?

INTRODUCTION

I loved working for restaurant companies, I love consulting for them...but more than that, I love being a customer of restaurants. I love the food and I love the experience. That is, when they are enjoyable. Particularly the experience. Because at its core, the restaurant business is not a food business. It's a people business. It's a relationship business. It just happens to involve food. Every experience in the restaurant industry offers incredible opportunity to wow every customer and even when things start to wrong, there are opportunities to save the occasion and wow the guests. This opportunity in every experience to hit a home run and restaurants having the opportunity to create life-long relationships with their customers gets me excited about the industry.

It is also important to play defense in the restaurants as any customer at any point of time has the total power to end that relationship with a restaurant. That's because one bad experience can undo dozens of great ones. Think about the impact of that bad experience. The short-term impact is the customer could go hungry. Maybe they didn't eat a bad meal, or maybe they didn't even get their meal. But the long-term impact is far worse. The long-term impact is they're not going to come back. Every day, longtime customers of a restaurant, whether it's a stand-alone locally owned restaurant or part of a nationwide chain, walk out vowing never to return because of the experience they had. Every person working in any restaurant must be aware of this and think it is a crime to let even one customer end an experience unhappy.

The insights shared in these interviews will help you jumpstart your business by taking big steps toward growing your business

and avoid costly missteps. Each expert I interviewed has practiced what they preach; they've been in the trenches. They've implemented what they've learned, and they've helped others do the same. They've seen the big results, and you can too.

In this book, they'll share inside stories about their actual experiences. If you're like me, you'll think to yourself, "Wow, I wish I could have that type of experience." Learning from the conversations will help you get a flavor of living those experiences.

Do you remember the Gatorade ads with Michael Jordan, featuring the phrase "Be like Mike"? They hit home with a lot of people. Because we want to be better. We have to continue to strive to be better.

So when you read these interviews, you just might say, "I want to be like Blaine. I want to be like Lane. I want to be like Randy." Or any of the those interviewed. Inspiration can come from anywhere. It's what you do with that inspiration that makes all the difference. And my personal request to you will be, please learn from the experts but don't try to be them; instead just be the "best you, you can be."

INTRODUCTION

I think this book is going to take you on an interesting journey.
Enjoy the ride!



Arjun Sen | August 2021



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MEET ARJUN SEN

Journey to wow one more®

I define myself as a father first and one of the luckiest persons on the planet. My daughter, Raka, has been one of coolest forces in my life and taught me the biggest lesson of all: “A successful journey is all about touching one more person.” This is relevant for every business as impact happens with one team member and one customer at a time. How we impact the lives of that one team member, and that one customer defines our long-term success. I’ve been lucky to work for some of the most fascinating brands and with CEOs of some of the world’s biggest companies, entrepreneurs who built empires, and some of the smartest marketing people on the planet. But the person I may have learned more from than anyone else was my grandmother, who raised me in Kolkata, India.

She taught me the importance of learning, discipline, and hard work. For 12 years, she woke up every morning at 4:00 AM so she could get me up and ready for school. She reminded me over and over again, success is 90% perspiration and 10% inspiration. One day I asked her why I was named Arjun. I thought I knew the answer as the meaning of the word Arjun in Sanskrit is “one and only.” She told me that the *Bhagavad*

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