



MARKETING STAR



Robert Tuchman: President and Founder of TSE Sports & Entertainment

[By Anique Gonzalez]

In the world of sports, we often hear of Cinderella stories. These stories describe those amazing teams who, despite the odds, were able to win for themselves, their fans, and their cities. These were the teams who believed in themselves and were ultimately able to succeed. In the big game known as business, Robert Tuchman was the one man team who epitomized that Cinderella story.

Tuchman, a broadcast journalism major who graduated from Boston University, always knew that he wanted to work in sports. In fact, his definitive goal was to be a television sports reporter. Like many niche industries, however, Tuchman found it difficult to break in. So, he decided to enter the sports industry from a business avenue, eventually choosing marketing. He states, "I'm glad now that I went that way because it has been easier for me to control my own destiny on the marketing side of the business."

After graduating from college, Tuchman began working for SportsPhone (a phone-in sports information service) while concurrently serving as an investment advisor with Lehman Brothers. Seeing little room for professional growth, he eventually left both companies and began working at the sports magazine *Sports Profiles* as a sales representative selling advertising. It was as a result of this position that Tuchman became aware of the untapped market for premium sports packages; a realization that would allow him to satisfy his passion for sports while catering to a lucrative consumer base.

Soon thereafter, at the age of 24, Tuchman decided to branch out on his own and start his own company. As he explains, "The time was right. If it didn't work out, I could always get another job in business somewhere doing something. I decided to go for it. I was fortunate at a young age to realize I would never be happy if I didn't do something I

had a passion for in life." And according to Tuchman, "life is too short to be around a job that makes you miserable."

So in 1996, he founded TSE (Tuchman Sports Enterprises) in his one-bedroom Manhattan apartment. When he started, he faced several obstacles because, like most first-time business owners, he had very little money and no proven track record of results. "Once I sold my first sports hospitality event to Edy's Ice Cream, I literally went out and

bought a fax machine. Then after my next deal, I bought letterhead. No joke. There were so many financial challenges which made the road very difficult to travel," he says.

However, he persevered and slowly built a reputation of excellence as well as a booming enterprise. Today his company is considered one of the most successful providers of corporate hospitality packages in the world. In fact, TSE is now a multimillion dollar company. Moreover, since its inception more than ten years ago, TSE has branched into other industries such as athletic and celebrity marketing, event planning, and promotions. This may in part be tied to the fact that since the beginning, he has whole-heartedly believed in what he was doing. "It's very important that you market something you believe in as well," he asserts.

His success has also been founded in the lessons he has learned from mentors along the way; lessons that he has applied to his business approach. Tom Joyce and Pam Griggs, from Hershey Chocolate Company and AT&T, respectively, both instilled in Tuchman the importance of client relationships. From them, he learned that above all else, businesses must strive for unparalleled customer service, develop trusting relationships, and promise only that which they can deliver. Implementing this triad ensures that TSE clients are always satisfied, which means that they always return.

Q: What was the last piece of music that you listened to?

A: Springsteen on Sirius. He has his own station now. It drives others crazy when I listen in the car. I have learned that you either love him or hate him. I love him.

Q: Throughout your lifetime, what movie have you watched the most?

A: *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*. I can repeat almost every single line from that movie cold. *Shawshank Redemption* is a close second. *Bronx Tale* would be third.

Q: What was the last book you read?

A: *The Bronx is Burning*.

Q: What is your favorite flavor of ice cream?

A: I'm now a Pinkberry fan. Original with blueberries and pomegranate.

Q: If you had an extra hour in the day, what would you spend it doing?

A: Reading.



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While Tuchman loves what he does, it was, in fact, passion that got him where he is in the first place. Marketing sports and entertainment does present unique challenges, especially when it comes to people. "When you suggest an athlete or celebrity to a company for utilizing in a marketing campaign, you better make sure this person is not going to end up on the front page of the New York Post." As marketers are fully aware, much of the relationship between consumers and a brand is built on credibility. So when a brand utilizes an athlete or celebrity in their marketing communications, they want to be certain that the individual will help to enhance and reinforce their image in the minds of consumers instead of hurting it.

Still, despite the challenges that Tuchman faces on a daily basis while running TSE, ranging from ensuring that the right spokesperson is used in a campaign to interacting with vendors to guarantee that everything goes as planned, the risk of choosing to start his own company is one that he does not regret. In his estimation, "You need to take a risk to create the next great idea. No one wants to fail, but people who don't go for it never succeed."

So in this ultimate story of someone who started with nothing except an idea and the desire to do well, and who ultimately became a success, there is one overarching theme: to accomplish your goals, all you need is passion and the belief in yourself.

Tuchman concludes: "Follow your passion. If you are doing something you are passionate about or if you are working in an industry you enjoy, it will show up in your enthusiasm and energy. It might take you a little longer to get to where you need to be in the marketing world, but the rewards far outweigh the cons in everyday life. That is the most important thing — to enjoy what you are doing everyday."

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