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Secrets of Success

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By Mike Bush

(KSDK) — Three people are all from different backgrounds. They are all working in different kinds of businesses. But, when it comes to success, they all agree on one thing.

People may know Mike Shanahan best as the former owner of the St. Louis Blues. Some think he was one of the best ambassadors that the sport of hockey ever had in this city.

"What killed us every year is the season started!" says Shanahan. "Through the summer we had the greatest team in hockey and then the season started and there it goes, right down the tubes!"

But if they gave Stanley Cups to prosperous companies, Shanahan may have a dozen by now. Shanahan is the chairman of Engineered Support Systems Incorporated, a company whose revenues have grown almost 500 percent since 1998.

"We're a supplier of military support equipment," Shanahan explained. "It ranges from radars to portable showers, to air conditioners to heaters."

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The company's reported revenue for 2002 was more than \$400 million.

Pat Mercurio is also a native St. Louisan who majored in philosophy at SIU-Edwardsville. She started working at a bank just to make some extra money and now has one of the best office views in the city.

"My job is to coordinate the various lines of business," she told us, "so that we're all focusing in one direction, so the whole team here is focusing on taking care of their needs."

Mercurio says that women make up 80 percent of the workforce in banking. If there were any barriers on the way up the career ladder, she paid no attention.

"If you let being a woman create a barrier to success you'll never get there," she said. "Since I can't control it, I decided to not let it get in the way."

That's how David Steward felt about the hurdles that may have been in his way as an African-American.

"That's not anything I concentrate on," he said, "that's a distraction. Those are other peoples' problems. That's not our problem."

Steward is a native of Clinton, Missouri, and former college basketball player. He started World Wide Technology, Inc. in 1990. It's now the largest African-American owned company in the United States.

"We think that we're able to deliver I.T. – Information Technology – solutions to the marketplace, better faster, more efficiently than anybody in the market place."



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Steward says it took him many years and five failed companies before he figured out the secret to success. It turns out his secret is the same as Pat Mercurio's and Mike Shanahan's.

Quite simply it's, "Treat people right."

"Whether it's people that you're working with, or partners, or customers or people you come across in the community," said Steward.

Mercurio added, "If you're good at that and concentrate and realize the value and importance of that, it will contribute to your success in just about anything."

"You look at your family. You look at your friends. You look at your business," said Shanahan. "If you can't interact with people, you can't make anything."

The watchwords for the 1980s and 90s seemed to be "greed is good." But these three success stories prefer words like "honesty" and "integrity." They all agree, as someone once said, that things turn out best for people who make the best of the way things turn out.

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