

*Li Costi*

# Successful Sales Strategies That Actually Work

WITH GUI COSTIN

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**Measure Success Podcast**

**CARL J. COX:** Welcome to the Measure Success Podcast, where I talk with top leaders about effective strategies that inspire success. Today, this episode is sponsored by 40 Accounting. 40 Accounting is built to help provide you bookkeeping and tax work to help make sure that as a small business, you're going to get that information done, and you don't have to worry about it. If you want to get more information, please go to [40accounting.com](https://40accounting.com).

With that, we're really excited for our guest, Gui Costin. And I wish you got to listen to our previous 20 minutes of talking about this ahead of time. It was amazing the amount of connections. It felt like brother from another mother type things. It just amazing the things that he said. So, he's a Founder and CEO of Dakota, a firm specializing in sales and marketing services for investment companies. Since its establishment in 2006, Dakota has assisted clients in raising over \$40 billion. And you can update that, of course, with the latest information, Gui.

He has a mission for mentor and fostering career growth within the industry and as a leader in sales and marketing. Actually, I've been very impressed talking about that. He also has kids who have done college sports. I think he said three of them, Gui, right? You mentioned behind that, and we had a really fun discussion. We'll bake that into this. One of the reasons I was intrigued about bringing Gui on to our podcast is because we do work with a lot of private equity firms, and that is his customer base. He's helping to help make sure private equity firms help get funding. And so we had a synergy there, but recognizing there's athletics, but also this passion for people. Because if you don't have that passion for people, it's harder to do things.

He also mentioned he has a book; Millennials Are Not Aliens. And he has a new book coming out called The Dakota Way, which by the time this podcast comes out, it's already going to be released. Excited to get that out. And he said he's also working on a third book, which you can talk about here as well. Gui, welcome so much to the Measure Success Podcast.

**GUI COSTIN:** Well, thank you so much for having me.

**CARL J. COX:** Ok, well, let's get going. I always like to start the why. Why you start your firm? It's always a scary thing to go off on your own and to become an entrepreneur. And you made that decision. Why did you do it? And what kind of drove you to make that decision?

**GUI COSTIN:** So I wouldn't recommend anybody take my career path. And my kids were teasing me because in the first 17 years of my career, from '89 until '06 when we started Dakota... I told the kids at 17 years, and I had 11 jobs, 11 W-2's. And they go, Dad, let's go through them. This was recently. So we went through them. It's actually 14, 14 W-2s, all great businesses, all great companies. And I think I did some good things. But it's every 18 months I switched jobs. So we started Dakota a little bit out of necessity because I had an idea for a product at the prior firm. I pitched them on it in the spring of '06. They said no. They fired me. Then we launched it, launched the idea in the fall of '06. But to answer your question, the mission has always been for me in my mind is I wanted to create a place where people in Philadelphia, young, college graduates, could come work, get slotted into a career, and stay here for a long time. And we could train them, develop them, teach them best practices, whether it's to sell marketing, technology, what have you. I really wanted to create an avenue, if you will, and a place where young college grads could come in the Philadelphia region to get slotted in day one and not have to go through what I did, which is 14 jobs in 17 years.

**CARL J. COX:** Well, you didn't realize that is very similar to the early part of my career as well. I have the amount of W-2s going all the way back to being in McDonald's at 14 years old but moving through from different companies. But let me ask you that question, why? What was it that was driving you from place to place? What either didn't seem right or was that kind of classic. You're an entrepreneur and never the best employee. What was driving some of that

change? Or was it just kind of got bored because you felt like you learned your basic and you wanted to get to that new step?

**GUI COSTIN:** I mean, you're asking probably a super, super deep question that I should jump on the couch right now. I'm teasing, but well, not really. I really think it's just when I've been... I don't know if you've done the personality test. But there's one test. This guy did 10 tests. One of the tests was an independence test, 0 to 29, and 29 is the most independent. And my score was 33. So I scored off the charts. So it's not so much that I'm necessarily an entrepreneur, which I think I definitely am, or that I had to have my own business. I was just a very independent person. And just whatever it was, that ended up being my path. And I was probably a little... I'm 58, but just about to be 58. So 58, a little bit more maybe spontaneous and just wanted it quickly. But it's really not a great way to go through life changing that often because part of the book that I talk about, and I see it today in our company, longevity in a role and a career, you can accomplish so much more in a good place, staying for a long period of time. And you never develop the commissions. You never develop the expertise if you keep changing that quickly. So I'm coaching up the guys here and the team here to hopefully stay for a long time, which then is a big responsibility for me to make sure everyone has upward mobility and career growth.

**CARL J. COX:** That's right. Good for you for recognizing that, is when you have that belief to grow other people... we have a duty to either give them more opportunities, meaning our firm needs to grow, or we need to send them off to other great opportunities when we have that type of environment. And we shouldn't feel bad about that, if that makes sense. It should be to help build and go where they're going to have the most impact, and they're not getting bored. You were mentioning earlier you have a very specific hiring group of people. Tell us who those people you hire and why.

**GUI COSTIN:** So you're referencing our business development role within our software business, which it requires sending cold emails almost since the minute

you get on the job to book first-time demos of our software product with very specific avatars, which are fundraisers at investment firms. You didn't go to college to send cold emails and get no's 95% of the time. And so for the normal person, who isn't used to being rejected constantly... and if you play a Division I sport that means... I go back to seventh grade. You've kind of been told you stink for a very long period of time, but you've had the resiliency to grind through and see it all the way to the end. And so that personality type just fits really, really well. And I'm teaching them a very valuable skill, and I'm teaching them how to acquire customers day one. And I'm acknowledging that it's really hard, and I do it with a group hug, with a lot of compassion. So it's not ever a beat down. It's with tons of compassion and tons of support. I never get the tears. People aren't getting back to me. They don't take anything personally. They're a great teammate. They share the best emails with their team, and they love the team environment. And that's the profile that we've seen to have a ridiculous amount of success in the role. And then if they just keep sticking with it... and it's not that other people aren't capable. It's just if you look at what it takes to get to that level with... the coaches are just very, very difficult on you, not because the coaches are bad people... because I think they're great people. And our coaches have been so extraordinary. I mean, I'd give anything to those guys for what they've done for the kids. But they're tough. They're really, really tough. But they're always tough for the right reasons for the kids.

**CARL J. COX:** So it's interesting. You just mentioned literally people who come through this, if you may, pipeline of Division I lacrosse players. And you just described it. They have a decade basically by the time they graduate of being beaten down a bit in terms of...but they were able to have the resilience and obviously the talent to continue on and keep on having an opportunity to play at the collegiate level, which is no small task, as you know, and any collegiate level player. But there's this part too of like... you said, there's a soft side of caring about it too, to care for the individuals, to care for the people that are there. You talk about this, you mentioned, in your new book, *The Dakota Way*. What does that mean? What does it mean... It sounds so touchy feely, if you may. And for a

lot of us who are hard-driving, business-related people, what do you mean by care? What behaviors help define caring for somebody else in the workplace?

**GUI COSTIN:** Coach Nostrant was our high school coach, and Coach Tambroni at Penn State was our college coach for both my sons. And both have ginormous hearts, ridiculously competitive. And they care about the afterlife. They know that lacrosse is going to end. And so they are very principled, and they don't compromise on their principles of what good looks like. And it's not just about the wins and the losses. It's about the development. It's about the discipline. It's about accountability. It's about accountability to your teammates. And so if you look at Coach Tambroni at Penn State, all he cares about is that all 12, 14 seniors have jobs after college. He creates this massive network of alumni, of alumni lacrosse players. He is so into the afterlife, if you will, because he knows it ends. And then what are you left with? What did you do with those kids? And when I study these guys... I studied Coach Nostrant. He's like a sixth sense as a coach. He's just a coach's coach, what he's been able to do over his lifetime and change people's lives now, tough as nails, both of them are. Ironically, both from Upstate New York. But when I look at them, what they've been able to give to these kids that will last them a lifetime, there's nothing that I can do to repay them enough for just how amazing they are. And then I think the nice thing is, when they do graduate from Penn State, they become friends with Coach T. And they see a different side of Coach T, which is pretty cool because he really is a sweet, warm, cool guy and fun to be around. But when you're playing for him, it's all business.

**CARL J. COX:** When you move into your company and these principles that you've been teaching in workshops to get to ultimately the book that you've been able to release, what are some principles in there that are really powerful that you found to be a difference maker for you and you find that also resonate outside of your office walls?

**GUI COSTIN:** Focus on what matters most. And that is the key, I think, to anything. Now, it's easy to say as a 58-year-old. But when I talk to my son... he graduated from college. He's got a great job, lacrosse team, the whole thing. And he goes, Dad, I knew there were six things that I could do in college each day to get better at lacrosse. Good example of focusing on what matters most. It's our number one principle of the book of our philosophy, of our company. Because in every endeavor, every project, every activity that you do, a lot of people can't... they might be one or two degrees off on what matters most. And so if you look at any time there's a problem in a company, any time there's a problem in a project, they're not focused on the things that matter most and the results that they're desiring. But I'll give you the why behind it because I think it's a two-sided deal here. You have to focus on what matters most. And then anything that you're going after, you have to ask yourself the question. This is what we do internally. Why am I doing this? And then you keep asking why until you can zero down to the core of the activity.

So for the lacrosse kids we hired to book demos, first-time demos re-engage demos daily. Are you scheduling for five cities at any given time? Why? Because that's what matters most. Why? Because you need purpose each day to say, I'm going to be in Boston. Can you meet at 9:00? I'm going to be in Boston. Can meet at 11:00, 1:00, 3:00, and 4:30? I'd love to introduce myself and tell you about my software product. I'm oversimplifying. And if you have three cities versus five, now you have two less cities to have that purpose every day. So there's a why behind the city scheduling. So on the 7:45 call, all 14 business development representatives have to go through in 30 seconds the five cities they're scheduling for every single day, five days a week. Why? Because it's a hard job. And left to their own devices, just like any human being... it's nothing to do with this... they're going to get unfocused. Why? Because it's hard. Why? Because it's rejection. But then you zero back to, and then why is that in their best interest? Because I'm teaching them principles that will literally be in their DNA for the rest of their lives in terms of sales training. And so you start to unpack, and you're like, ok, cool. And then if they do that and then it's like, oh, we

need to tweak the email. We're not getting it right. So let's tweak the email. Let's make the email better. And then if you follow that, all of a sudden, the results are like boom. And that's what we've seen. So they have extraordinary success. But it requires a lot of structure and focus, discipline, consistency.

**CARL J. COX:** Now as it goes with selling, it's great to have... I've found you can have a decent product, and you have a great sales force. And it could exceed expectations. But based on our discussions, you've also created a great product as well. Why has your product been really valuable for investors?

**GUI COSTIN:** So again, I'm going to answer this in two questions. Well, one, it's valuable to investors. As you're looking for investors, you're looking for money, is because we've created a fully accurate, complete, and up-to-date CRM database for salespeople. So they do not have to do any research. They simply log in. Because you have to go to a city to book meetings. You go to Boston, or New York, or Chicago, or San Francisco, LA, what have you. And you have everybody that you want to meet with right there categorized properly so you can get to the right person immediately. And so a few things there. You're not researching who to call on. You're not having bounced emails, bad phone numbers. And also, this is like the little crime of it all, you book an amazing two days in LA. You're in Century City. You're doing all the meetings and everything. And then you're on the third floor doing a meeting, and you look at the directory. And you're like, hmm, oh jeez, ooh, XYZ Capital. Oh, I didn't they existed. But they manage \$3 billion. They're the prime target. You didn't even about them. You never called on them. Why? Because they weren't in your database. So the little nuances like that. So we give people a complete, accurate, and up-to-date contact database to do cold outreach. That is the true value. So I'll answer the question that way.

**CARL J. COX:** No, yeah, no, that's fantastic. ok. You mentioned about part of what you're trying to do, once again, and grow and develop the culture behind it. I want you to talk about you creating this book because I thought it was interesting. I appreciate you coming behind the scenes. What I didn't tell you beforehand is



when I first wrote my book, I actually wrote a different book. It was called The Seven Sales of Success. And I didn't want it after I was done. And actually, somebody kind of called me out on the title a bit. I was like this isn't who I want to get out. And so I completely rewrote it and turned it into a fable instead because I wanted something that people would pick up and read. I wanted the small business entrepreneur. And I wanted the investor to go, hey, this is something that we think an operator and a company could understand or somebody, who is an entrepreneur, is considering some of their business. They can understand why this is important. But it was a lot of hard work. You had some real significant challenges coming up with this book. Why did that happen, and why was it important to change it when you went through that process?

**GUI COSTIN:** So when we wrote The Dakota Way, I wrote it based upon my own sales processes. And it's one thing that I do believe... and this is a little bit of a tangential answer. I want to make one point because I really think it's important. I believe especially in small businesses, small to mid-sized businesses. The CEO must own the sales process. The sales process is your go-to-market process. And if you're just going to think... just like hiring a CMO... I don't want to go there. But it's the same thing. There's no magic bullet. So you think you're going to hire a VP of sales, and that person's going to come in and all of a sudden magically put a sales process together that's going to light up your whole company. And it's just going to work like magic. I mean, that's a unicorn. It might happen, as we say. I've heard about them. I've never actually seen one. But the CEO has been making the sales. The CEO knows how to sell the product. The CEO has to put the process in place that he or she knows works and then hire the person to implement the process. So during the interview process, you say, hey, we have the XYZ way of doing things. This is what we want you to execute on, and these are the parameters that we've put into place.

Now, it's easy to say after 35 years of working and a billion mistakes that I've made. So the sales process. Why the book took so long is because I had a wonderful... we hired a really wonderful ghostwriter. I did all these types of

conversations, explained everything, anecdotes. I coached our golf team in high school for nine years, where I learned true sales leadership by coaching 15 to 18-year-olds. So I lived that for... and we did six championships, three seconds, state championships. We created an amazing program with amazing kids. But I learned a lot in that process. It, however, was never in my voice. And I couldn't release the book of my own personal and company sales process be in somebody else's voice, even though the principles were the same. The words were the same. But it wasn't in my voice. And so it just took a long time. We finally found Gail. She's an incredible ghostwriter. She totally bought into my voice, got it the right voice. And so we got it exactly as... it's like, I feel like I'm talking to a Gui because that's what we wanted when you're reading the book.

**CARL J. COX:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's when you know you've nailed it right is when somebody... and I've been fortunate to have that experience, where I just was in Houston recently at a facilitation. My request was it'd be great if you could read the book ahead of time. And they're like, oh, I could hear your voice. And I was like, yes, thank you. What's even better when they say, I feel like I was in the play, so to speak. And that's what happened. People started saying, oh, I feel like I was this person in the role in the book. And I was like, that's when you feel like it's been nailed because they can actually resonate with it, understand it, and take the next step. But that's not an easy process to get to that level and to go through that. So once again, kudos to you to holding back and making those changes. Because I think a lot of people produce art, but it's not necessarily fully reflective of who they are. But interestingly enough, you're working on a third book. Why? What about the third book? What's the purpose behind that?

**GUI COSTIN:** So The Dakota Way is our four core principles of fundraising sales, how to raise money. And it's very specific around what works and what matters most, as I referenced earlier. We were going to do three extra chapters on leadership and, again, lessons learned in leadership. And it just got to be too much. It was just too much. And so we lopped off... I lopped off the last three chapters, concluded it with The Dakota Way, which is the four core principles of

sales. I have little leadership insights in each chapter, kind of a leadership takeaway. And then we quickly just pivoted to the second book called Be Kind. And it's everything we've tried to accomplish at Dakota in terms of building the culture and how we treat one another and how I treat everyone. And so that was really the thing. And I thought to myself, now I have Gail. I can rehire her, get onto a program. It's formulaic. And let's just press play, and let's go. And we just continued on. So it wasn't like we... so that's really why the momentum was there. And I'm really enjoying Be Kind.

So Dakota Way, four core principles of fundraising sales, no emotional necessarily attachment. They are four core principles that work, you what I mean? And they work every single time as long as you have a somewhat good product. But it requires a lot of discipline, a lot of vulnerability. There's a lot of things that play into this. Be Kind, writing a book on leadership, I mean, it's like an emotional journey every word because you're reflecting on all the stuff you didn't do right in different situations. And you have to reflect on that lesson learned because a 22-year-old probably couldn't write this book. It's through all the nicks and the scrapes and my Bobby Knight moments with certain people that I tell in the story of the book and all that. And it's really emotional. The book on Little League, calling out the coaches and how they treat eight-year-olds and 10-year-olds. We love that just being a crazy parent, which is 100% of the parents are crazy. I love the parents are like, yeah, the hockey moms are the craziest. I'm like, ever seen a lacrosse mom? You ever seen a lacrosse dad? You ever seen a baseball dad, soccer mommy? I mean, give me a break. Jamie's jiu-jitsu, who's behind the camera right here-- he's beyond a purple belt now. What, brown belt? I mean, he's got kids in this. we're All crazy. We all want the best for our kids. We all want our kids' lives to work out. It's emotionally challenging. But there's things that you can do to maybe lessen the craziness or just get a little distinction here and there. Like I said, coaching our golf team from 2011 to 2018, nine seasons, that was a fundamental game changer for me because I was a college golfer. Very different what you can say or should be saying to a golfer than you're saying to a team sport athlete. Now, it's a personal

choice as a coach. You choose what comes out of your mouth. But I don't think you're going to have the same effect saying the same thing to a lacrosse player that you are a golfer or a team soccer player, hockey player, football player. So I had to be very nuanced and very thoughtful with my words.

**CARL J. COX:** Yeah. And obviously, it worked you described there. Because it is, as I like to joke in golf... you're a real golfer. I'm not. But the concept of... what is it? Golf is 90% mental, and the other 10% is mental. That's how it feels on my end. So yeah. But once again, to get to that level where you're playing that consistent... what I like about what you've described, though, so many times in here, is you appear to be getting to what you call excellence, true excellence. You described it in lacrosse. You described it in the sales piece, and you described it in golf. And it does often come down to the consistency of the little things. There's the big principles that you describe, but it's also the little things that matter. I'm doing an example of one of the... I was fortunate enough to be underneath a really great high school football coach. And we would have it so dialed in where we knew... I could tell the entire offensive line what foot they were going to have on the third step. We had that mechanically dialed in. And we would run the same plays where literally our offensive line would call audibles because they were so experienced because they've been running it since they were in peewee football. So I'm just kind of... maybe you could give one example. What is one of these little things that's a big thing that you have to be consistent with excellence?

**GUI COSTIN:** Well, it comes back to... because you're really referencing the Packers and Vince Lombardi. And it's like, what, something, whatever that play that he ran consistently. I think it comes down to... a lot of people say focus and improve your weaknesses. It's focus... In my opinion, it's not the way to go. Focus on what you do well. And then 10x down on that and keep repeating it. Obviously, there's a refinement to it, but you just want to keep getting better at what you're doing. But you got to figure out what works. And so the golf team, so let's just think about that. It really came down to... so when you're talking about

excellence in golf coaching, if you've played the game like I did... and my coach is amazing. But still, you realize if you say something to a player... so there's an old line by a very famous Spanish golfer named Seve Ballesteros. And this came up because one of my assistant coaches, early on, he looks at one of the kids and he goes, it was 20 feet. How did you three putt? So I go, coach, come here. He goes, what's that? I said, well, Seve Ballesteros is quoted in a press conference. And the reporter goes, Seve, how did you four putt the 14th green? He goes, a putt I miss, a putt I miss, a putt I miss, a putt I make. Basically, I know dumb questions. Like you think I was trying to four putt? You think these kids are trying to hit it out of bounds? They're trying their best. And so the goal is... what I thought mattered most within our golf program is to create an environment where those boys can be unencumbered from me. So you say to yourself, ok, well, why? Because all summer long, they're playing in tournaments, and they're unencumbered by me. They're traveling the state and the country, playing in golf tournaments by themselves, staying in hotels with their friends or what have you. But I did it. But they're out on the golf course, just them and the golf course. Now all of sudden, they're going to play high school golf, and they're going to have to listen to me. Like that makes no sense. So I'd always give my five seconds of coaching before each match. And really, what I was... the only thing I would remind them consistently is just one shot at a time, which is just focus on what you can control. And then simultaneous to that is when you're looking over at the other fairway, don't... you might think your teammates are making a double bogey. They could be making a birdie. You don't know. Just play your own game. And that was it. And then I would just huge smile. And I would never sing. And we'd do nice dinners. We'd go to parents' house. We created a whole program of positivity to try to set that... we didn't win every time, but to set these kids up so they could perform their best. And a lot of the wins that we had of these championships were like by one or two shots. And you're playing 30 matches a year. And you're winning by one or two. And twice, we ran the table, 30 and 0, which is almost impossible to do given that tight margin. So that was the approach. And I ended up carrying out that similar philosophy into our company.

**CARL J. COX:** You nailed something, I think, super important there, which once again is get down to it... and we talk about this often in strategic planning execution is it's the leading indicators not the lagging indicators that matter. And that comes down to focusing on what you can control. And you describe that. It's like in golf; it's one shot at a time. It doesn't matter where the next shot. It doesn't matter the shot behind. It just matters on focusing on that connection on the ball at that moment. And then you are more likely to have a better outcome as a result of that event and also focusing on your strengths. We're big believers in that as well. It's amazing how many times we'll think we could do something outside our... it doesn't mean we aren't multi-talented. But the more you do what you're great at and you're naturally talented towards, the greater opportunity you're going to have in life. So a couple of our final questions. You've got a couple of minutes left here. Today, now, how do you measure success in your business?

**GUI COSTIN:** Well, first off, it's the team. I think about the team all the time. And is everybody growing? Is everybody developing? Am I doing my job basically clearing the deck, removing obstacles? And then also, there's only certain things a CEO can do that others can't do. And I say this in a very positive way, but it is being a little bit of a BS detector and just kind of being aware of what's going on, asking questions, observing, and then coming in and then saying, OK, so this project's been on the table for four weeks now. The same thing comes up, and I'm not seeing any movement. Walk me through why this isn't moving. So it's being to me incredibly observant and then, in a nice way, pushing people into that uncomfortable zone and acknowledging what's crazy. And then we do something called W days, which once a month... we have one on Tuesday... each division comes in. And when we were doing these, we were calling them off-sites. In an off-site, they'd present, update, all this stuff. People were nervous, stressing over the presentation. It turned into me just saying, turn off the presentation, just tell me what's working, what's not working. So then I called on a Saturday our CFO. I'm like, Tim, we're not doing off-sites anymore. He's like, wait a second. I said, no, we're going to call them W days. No one's preparing for

anything. They're going to show up, the division. It could be the CSMs, the BDRs, the AEs, product, technology, HR, community outreach. I'm going to ask you, hey, what's going on? What's working, and what's not working? And you wouldn't believe... after 30 days, you think you just covered everything. They're like, well, I am up on Saturdays doing this. And they're like you would hire that person to do that? Yeah, that's why I'm asking, what's not working? Because I don't want you working Saturday mornings. And so by uncovering and just pulling out of people what a struggle is or I'm doing this has had magical, magical impact. And then I always have a theme. So the last theme was why. So we're going to examine the question why and asking you why everything that you do. And so just unpacking that. And so that was extremely, extremely powerful. And then me also just asking why.

2025, the theme for the company coming from me is optimization. What that translates into is OK, this business has been now in business for six years. We need to look at every single thing we're doing and develop a habit of optimizing every single thing that we do, and meaning, OK, have we been sending the same email to invite them to the same event? Let's just start having some fun and A/B test and send a really crazy subject line versus this subject line and do all this stuff. Well, guess what, we just started... they just told me upstairs we just literally 2.5 xed our responses just because we tweaked this. And so it's kind of pushing and prodding a little bit in that. And so I think that to me is a leader is just... that's being observant. And you don't want these fire drills where you're yelling and screaming all the time. It's like, hey, we've been sending this email. Do you want to tweak it a little bit? Do you want to change it? Hey, let's look at our website stats. What are we doing here? What are we doing there? So let's optimize everything. And I'm just giving a couple of examples. This goes across everything that we're doing.

**CARL J. COX:** Seems like you clearly have great habits that you do on a regular basis. What is one habit, in particular, if you could spend a minute that you know has really been helpful for you to be a successful leader?

**GUI COSTIN:** Oh, I thought you were going to ask, what's one habit... well, one is our 7:45 check-in in daily for our software sales team and our 5 o'clock check-in, which is replicated by our investment sales team. And so from a leadership perspective, you were talking about golf being mental. Well, I think being an artist has the same mental challenges, I think being an actor, a performer. I think in every endeavor in life, mental things that are weird get in our way. So if I said to you... I said to one guy, I said, yeah, we have a 7:46... we have 10 sales meetings a week. A 7:45 check-in, and it runs 11 minutes. This is what we do. He goes; you must be Mr. Popular. Every kid on that team is like; this is my favorite part of the day because they have to be accountable for their plan for the day. And to think that you can all of a sudden let your foot off the brake or in your brain might say, I've read every book, don't be a micromanager, delegate this, that... you're talking about the mental aspects. That's what can get in your head as a leader. You're thinking about that thing you read or that email that you got. Oh, well, I don't want to do that. Well, I've looked at the consistency of what works, what matters most. It's consistently applying that every single day because it's not just, I don't think, my personal growth as a leader. I'd be letting down the whole team. Or I would be letting down the team. And then they would leave because they'd be like, this was working, but everyone's kind of doing their own thing now. Remember in the old days, guys, we used to meet at 7:45 every time. We got all these results, that stopped. In fact, we actually doubled, tripled down on the things that work to maintain that consistency.

Now, very important, I think, to always let your team come back to you and say, hey, look, we've been doing this for six months or 18 months. This team meeting is just not effective anymore. All right, good, let's stop doing it. In fact, we recently took, except for the 7:45, every single team meeting off the calendar and rebuilt because the guys were... and I didn't where to start. So I was like, let's just take all off. Which ones do you want to add back in? They're like, OK. So I don't know if that exactly answers your question, but it's that consistency of what works and never compromising.



**CARL J. COX:** How do you now measure success in your personal life.

**GUI COSTIN:** Oh wow. Well, one, the relationship with my kids and my wife, numero uno. I try not to helicopter. And let them make their own mistakes and make their own decisions and stuff, just when to let your foot off the brake. And also being 58... at 48, you're a little bit different about health, how you're thinking about things, preventative medicine today. You're reading a lot with Peter Attia and just all the longevity books. It's just kind of fun. So that's a big deal because now at 58, weird things can happen very quickly, so have to be very attuned to health. And I personally love getting up in the morning and thinking about the business and our teammates, how to grow. It's a gift for me like you can't believe. It's a lifetime gift, having the opportunity to get up every day, the creative exercise to serve 80 different teammates at our company and then thousands of customers. I treat service like it's a gift from God to be able to serve other people and help them get what they want. And that's been the mantra since 2011. I think I might have mentioned that. So that's why I just got to keep staying in good shape and thinking about that and making sure you're taking care of everybody around you.

**CARL J. COX:** Well said. Gui, how can people connect and learn more about what you're doing?

**GUI COSTIN:** So Dakota.com has an enormous amount of information. And then just personally the books and stuff like that, It's GuiCostin.com.

**CARL J. COX:** Perfect. Once again, Gui, thank you so much for being a part of the Measure Success Podcast. It has been a real treat to have you on.

**GUI COSTIN:** Well, thank you for having me. I really enjoyed it. Thanks.

**CARL J. COX:** I hope you've enjoyed this podcast. It's been a tremendous amount of fun. I appreciate all the synergies we've had in terms of coaching and being involved in private equity, and sales, and growing business, et cetera. So thank you so much. I hope you enjoyed listening. I encourage you to like, share, and send with others. That's how we continue to grow and continue this climb, over 200-plus podcasts recorded. Thank you so much for all your support over the years. Wishing you the very best in measuring your success. Have a great day.