

[What to read]

What's On the BOOKSHELF

Over the years, we've had numerous conversations with industry leaders and often one of the topics that we discuss is the latest book read. Here are what our industry leaders are reading.

SHOE DOG: A MEMOIR BY THE CREATOR OF NIKE

by Phil Knight

I've always been fascinated by autobiographies. Maybe it's the journey aspect, the living of someone else's life through their eyes. I've read many of them, all the way from "Unbroken" to "Mother

Angelica," and always come away with at least a new sense of perspective. But with Phil Knight's memoir "Shoe Dog," there are many surprising lessons as well, both personal and professional, concerning vision, circumstance and choice.

In the early '60s, running was definitely not the big business it is now. In fact, it was considered kind of an odd activity by most people. Selling running shoes to a non-

running public would have to come second to the overarching task of popularizing the sport.

Lesson No. 1: Vision must come before mission. At the request of his old running coach, Bill Bowerman, Knight recruited Bob Woodell, a person who would turn out to be Knight's right-hand man. But Woodell was no ordinary guy. An elite long jumper from the University of Oregon with a once brilliant athletic future, he suffered an accident that ended his track career very early on, confining him to a wheelchair. Yet instead of simply operating behind the scenes, he opted to travel all over the country, very publicly promoting Nike's philosophy. Woodell's love and understanding of what running could mean to millions went far beyond his own two feet, and helped propel the sport, and Nike in the process. Woodell's vision was bigger than

the mission – and (lesson No. 2) the seemingly overwhelming circumstances of the day.

Fast forward to the challenges of the young Nike company, from debating to either close down or double down, and go even bigger. Decisions like that take guts and daring. They also take time, something Knight was missing a lot of with his young son, and this became his greatest regret. Yet in the pursuit of the American Dream in the corporate world, such regrets are a

given for many of us, accepted as simply collateral damage. However, I see this part of Knight's journey as a cautionary tale about being aware of the times we might disappoint our families, even when they understand. Balance can be difficult, but it can be done if we choose well, if we choose consciously. Lesson No. 3, among so many others.

When I read this book, it was October. I was thinking about the closing of the year, the beginning of 2017, and what lies ahead. Knight quotes Bowerman, referring to the Oregon Trail: "The cowards never started, and the weak died along the way – that leaves us." But there's more to that quote. "Only the strong arrived. They were the pioneers." And something struck me. I want to be a pioneer – for my company, for my family, for myself. I strongly recommend this book to anyone else who feels the same.



[Review by Estella Hale,
VP of Product, SHR]

