



Ron Orsini
VP NetVentures
Reliant Energy

At the time of this interview, Ron Orsini was vice president of Net Ventures for Reliant Energy, Inc. In addition to setting the strategic direction of the company's Internet efforts, Ron is responsible for identifying, analyzing and developing new eBusiness opportunities. He has been Reliant Energy's lead in the formation of GuideStreet.com, a home services infomediary in Houston, and Pantellos Corporation, an eMarketplace formed by 21 of the largest electricity, natural gas and pipeline companies in North America. He had previously served as director of Corporate Strategy and Business Development for Compaq Computer Corporation. Ron earned a bachelor degree in economics from Princeton University and his MBA degree in finance and strategic planning from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. He is married and has two young children.

professional

What are top 3 principles for success in your industry?

I work at helping companies apply the Internet to their businesses. What I think is a key to success is someone who can quickly adapt to change, marry creative thinking with hard facts and quantitative analysis, and be able to think outside of the box. We deliver solutions to customers. Ultimately if you don't meet your customer's needs, you're not going to be around tomorrow.

What character qualities do you look for when hiring?

I call it the airline test. Is it someone I could sit next to for a five-hour flight and really feel comfortable with them? Are they someone of integrity and high moral character? Is it someone that is dedicated to success, to a shared success on a team? Are they hard working? Do they have what we call "fire in the belly" and wanting to really go the extra mile? And at the same time, are they open to self-improvement? Do they really want to make themselves a better person and be open to that constructive feedback on a regular basis?

What makes a great leader?

A great leader is someone that can come up with and articulate a strong vision based on reality and facts that employees and customers can understand and rally around. A leader is also someone that is constantly motivating people to improve themselves, to provide a greater challenge in their life and in their work experience. Above all, a great leader is someone that has a high moral character, that isn't questioned about ulterior motives, but can clearly be trusted in the direction that they're leading us.

What was your worst career decision or mistake?

My worst career move was joining a company that had already hit its peak. It was quite an ego boost to work for a company that was just recently named Forbes Magazine Company of the Year. But in reality, right after that the company hit rocky times. It's just very hard to sustain that. Despite the rush of working for such a strong company with a strong reputation, the company came back to reality and we had a tough road to hoe.

What are the pitfalls of success or careerism?

Successful people sometimes become over confident. They're not necessarily open to learning, going forward and improving. Another pitfall is that you get more and more demands of your time. You have to make more trade offs in what you do.



personal

How do you define success? How has your definition evolved?

Success is very simply, achieving what you set out to do, such as getting a return on your investment, whether that investment is time, effort or money. Success tends to be short-lived and usually very personal. Significance is a longer term and more lasting result or impression that affects others around you, good or bad.

What does balance mean to you? How important is balance to success?

It's hard to sustain success without having balance. Some people can be a great sprinter, but ultimately in business, at least, most of the time it's the marathoner that wins. That requires a lot more pacing and balance.

spiritual

How has God changed your life? How has your choice of faith in God changed your life?

Having God in my life has given me more of an internal perspective of what really matters. It means that I don't get disappointed about the day to day ups and downs in my life. I focus on a greater, longer-term peace and joy that I couldn't get from any job ... even the most perfect job.

Can you follow Christ and still have a successful career, family and such?

I think you can. I believe the boardroom and the work place is a mission field, too. There's no reason why someone can't be Christ-like in their job. God doesn't give us any more challenges than what we can handle, even at work. We can use the fruits of a successful career in serving Christ through giving of our time, of our resources and in the ability to influence people.

How has God /faith changed your perspective on fulfillment, significance and success

I see a lot of people that have done quite well, professionally, but they've made a lot of sacrifices along the way with their families and with their spouses. They have dedicated their life to that one area, but left a lot of damage along the way. I'm sure it's left a lot of emotional damage, internally. We need to keep letting people know that there are ways to achieve happiness, if you're looking in the right place for it. A relationship with God provides a lot of that peace and understanding to make it through the rough times and to make it past the "what next? What else is there to do?" Or "this isn't what I expected it to be". That's how it's really helped me keep balance and keep from jumping out the window.

What spiritual principles do you live and work by?

In the modern conveniences of today, we have a lot of time to think and think to more satisfying higher level needs in our lives. Certainly a lot of people we work with have material ambitions, materialistic desires. To show how you can be happy without those types of things or in a way to show that those things don't drive your happiness, are the values that are underpinning of faith that you can ultimately talk about. Show how you're different in handling stressful situations and handling frustration that could potentially lead to anger, and handling challenging inter-personal relationships. Success in my mind is for someone who works for me or a peer of mine to say, "Wow, you know, Ron really has a different perspective in life and I wonder what's driving that?"