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Managing

Q&A: THE APPRENTICE WINNER KELLY PERDEW

What happens to winners of *The Apprentice* after they spend a year working for Donald Trump?

By Kim Shiffman
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What happens to winners of *The Apprentice* after they spend a year working for Donald Trump? Like any reality-TV contestant, they squeeze out every second of their 15 minutes of fame. The winner of *The Apprentice*'s second season, military man Kelly Perdue, is doing just that. He's currently hosting *GI Factory*, a show that looks at military technologies, and he recently published *Take Command: 10 Leadership Principles I Learned in the Military and Put to Work for Donald Trump*.

But give him some respect: before appearing on *The Apprentice*, Perdue was a proven entrepreneur. He founded and grew several successful U.S.-based firms, including a dot-com and an event marketing and production company. PROFIT spoke to Perdue recently to ask him about entrepreneurship, *The Apprentice* and, of course, The Donald.

Are entrepreneurs are born or made?

I think they are made. No one's born an entrepreneur. That said, I think there are two types of entrepreneurs. There are those people who work in an industry, and because of their knowledge and understanding, they identify a problem and come up with a solution, either inside their organization or they go and build a team around themselves. They become an entrepreneur from their circumstances. The other kind is what I am: someone who has a deep, burning desire to build an organization.

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When should businesses be forced to surrender customer information to police / regulators?

- Never
- Only for targeted investigations
- Anytime -- customers should have nothing to hide

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Are the challenges on *The Apprentice* a good test of someone's ability to effectively manage a business?

The tasks on the show provide a great proxy for how you manage teams. They show your passion, attention to detail and your problem-solving capability. Certainly a three-day task can't be an exact model, but it gives you insight into people's team-leading capability. And

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definitely you get to see how somebody reacts under pressure. Adversity reveals brilliance.

What qualities helped you to win the show?

Have you seen my book, *Take Command: 10 Leadership Principles I Learned in the Military and Put to Work for Donald Trump*? Those 10 principals helped a lot. Planning, integrity and probably the flexibility are the three of the ten that were most salient during the show.

Tell us a bit more about the book.

After I won *The Apprentice*, I was asked over and over again, "Do you think your military background helped you win?" and my initial reaction was, "Definitely." I couldn't understand why people didn't understand the amazing amount of leadership training you get the military, so I wanted to identify the military training I received and how it applies to business. So I got insights from amazing business leaders who have military background. Marsha Evans, former CEO of the Red Cross, and Jim Kimsey, founding CEO of AOL, have hit massive home runs in business, and they attribute their success to military principles.

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