

Daniel Geske

Tarpon Springs, Florida



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Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Daniel Geske:

Originally from New Orleans, Daniel Geske, Founder, President and CEO of DGC Training, has acquired a unique skill set that allows him to help companies make transformative changes in the areas of Organizational Strategy, Leadership Development, Talent Management, Project Management, Technology and Labor Relations. In 2012, while living in Columbus, OH, he made the decision, after 20 years in Human Resources and Learning & Organizational Development to launch his own business. Geske shared the story behind his entrepreneurial journey and how, through a diverse background that includes military experience, he's helping companies build a stronger workforce and ultimately generate more revenue.

"When I graduated from high school I was only 17," Geske said. "I had to

get my parents to sign me into the military. I actually celebrated my 18th birthday in basic training. I was young, but it was a great experience. I learned about leadership, conflict resolution, collaboration, relationships, trust, loyalty and how to collaborate with other people. In the military, you either fail or win as a team – and teams are built by trust. I learned early on that you can't put a price tag on these soft skills."

Geske continued, "After the Air Force, I completed a Bachelor's and a Master's Degree in Texas and landed my first professional job as an Assistant Director with Aramark. After transferring to Illinois, my contract ended and I branched off into the education space. I worked for The American Intercontinental University and the Illinois Institute of Art in various roles including, Admissions Advisor, Associate Student Manager and Assistant Director of Admissions. I also got a second Master's Degree in Human Resource Development and a third Master's Degree in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. After a move to Ohio, to be closer to my father who had a heart attack, I took a position with Miami-Jacobs College as a Community Relations Coordinator before starting my own business."

As Geske shared, the college shut down, leaving him in an ideal position to "go for it". When he quickly landed his first contract with Cardinal Health, doing training development, he knew he could build on his early momentum.

"I took a position with CECO Environmental while building out my business on the side," Geske said. "During the day I managed all training and development for 24 companies across North America, South America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. At night and on the

weekends, I worked on my business. By September 2019, the company went through downsizing right around the time I was prepared to branch out on my own.”

Geske continued, “Even though I was prepared, it was still a tough time. I went from benefits and the security of a paycheck every two weeks to having to generate all of my own income. I also had a family to take care of. I quickly learned that two or three months could go by with no income, but then I’d land a solid contract. The first 12 months were the toughest. I had to take from savings, borrow from my 401(k) and even took out loans, but I never gave up.”

After a year, things started to pick up for Geske. He grew his business mainly through networking and building relationships. Over time, he brought partners into his business and expanded his clientele base to include international clients. He also honed in on how and what his business would focus on.

“We transferred the way we do business into different buckets,” he said. “We’ve identified what we’re really good at, what we’re passionate about and what’s outside of our wheelhouse. We went from a ‘boil the ocean’ approach to defining our niche. When we first started, we focused on three areas: Soft Skills, Educational Institutions and Corporate Training. We then realized that model wasn’t working, so we transformed to focus on corporate training. However, that was still too broad. That’s when we narrowed in on ‘Leadership Development and Cultural Transformation’ in the corporate sector.”

Geske is a self-described expert in implementing Resilient, Healthy and High-Performance Culture (HPC), through compassionate servant

leadership, gratitude, humility, empathy, grace, grit, collaboration, trust and integrity. He leverages HR, L&OD, leadership, culture, talent optimization, PM excellence, employee empowerment, employee engagement, accountability, positivity and inspiring organizations to continuously improve their game through coaching and talent development.

As a Chief People Officer (CPO) and Culture Transformation Executive, Geske has developed his expertise across a broad spectrum of industries including: Manufacturing, Air Pollution Control, Fluid Handling & Filtration, Engineered Equipment, Oil & Gas, Renewable Energy, Healthcare, Managed Services and Education. He deploys a compassionate servant leadership style to develop, coach and mentor individuals, teams and organizations.

In 2018, after enduring several winters in the mid-west, Geske made the decision to relocate to the Sunshine State. As he shared, the decision to move south was a pretty easy one.

“I had my own business that allowed me to work remotely,” he said. “I could pretty much work from anywhere. When I started to think about where I wanted to live, build some roots and eventually retire, the Tampa Bay area came to mind. I always vacationed here and love the area. I also have a big passion for the ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. Moving here just felt like the right fit.”

Since making the move, Geske has dealt with the standard challenges of moving a business to a different state. He’s also had to contend with the ramifications of COVID-19. Fortunately for Geske, his business is tailor made to operate virtually.

“Long before COVID, we started putting in place a virtual model,” he said. “We do live, virtual and blended approaches. It’s been challenging, but nowhere near as bad as the difficulties faced by other businesses. Our leadership model is also well-suited for today’s challenges. We don’t manage by titles. We take more of a round-table approach. Everyone has an equal say and we ask everyone to leave their egos at the door. We’re focused on being customer-centric and serving our clients in the best way possible.”

As Geske shared, owning his own business is rewarding in more ways than one. “Knowing when I lay my head down at night that I’ve made a difference in people’s lives is a great feeling,” he said. “We help businesses grow and keep their doors open and we develop people and help them grow and succeed. I love learning about our client’s goals and challenges and how to connect those dots. It’s extremely rewarding.”

Looking ahead, Geske, who’s currently pursuing his Ph.D. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology, would eventually like to add more team building type services and talent management to his portfolio. He would also love to expand his business throughout the United States and internationally – with onsite training options at each facility.

What advice does Geske have for aspiring entrepreneurs? “It starts with believing in yourself and your product or service,” he said. “Starting your own business is something you have to be prepared for – not just financially, but also with the right mindset. You need drive, determination and grit, along with agility and resilience. Also, it’s important to get support from family and friends. You will hit walls.

You'll also have days where you question everything. I've had that in the past. Entrepreneurship is not for everybody and success doesn't come fast. You should plan on 12 to 18 months of being able to sustain yourself without income from the business."

Geske continued, "Also, never think you're the smartest person in the room. Always leave your ego at the door. Remember, you don't have to be the master of everything. Leverage yourself and your team based on their strengths. Along those lines, don't just be in a room of like-minded people. You want to have diversity. People of different ages, genders, experience, backgrounds, etc, all bring different perspectives to the table. Lastly, know your moral compass. Identify the values that are important to you and stick with them."

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