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... and more!

Weeks away from the 2019 DLE Gen Now Retreat. It’s life changing!

Check out the retreat schedule
To BIC or Not to BIC? That is the Question.

By Linda Dulye, DLE Founder and Executive Director

Oct 8th started out exhilarating with a highly-anticipated tour of the Berkshire Innovation Center (BIC). Nick, a lead engineer at the construction site, guided BIC executive director Ben Sosne and me around bustling crews. This is where 60 rising leaders and celebrated speakers will come together for the first time on Day 1 of the 2019 DLE Gen Now Retreat.

“Everyone is pushing for this,” my BIC colleagues assured. Adjusting my hard hat, I felt a surge of optimism. After many months of planning with the BIC team, my dream to launch the DLE on Nov. 1st at this state-of-the-art complex in Pittsfield (MA) felt real.

Ben and I gave a thumbs-up salute. The DLE was poised to make history as the first group hosted at the BIC.

Ten hours later, a late-night message completely derailed that optimism. A surprise snafu had stalled the project timeline—the BIC may not be ready for our 12th annual DLE Retreat after all.

Stunned, I had to catch my breath and confront the unexpected. That’s the theme of this month’s Community Connection—facing the unexpected. We’ve all experienced it. And will continue to.

In the pages ahead, MGM Casino President Mike Mathis, TV News Reporter Danielle Waugh, and other DLE community members share personal stories and strategies for pushing forward when adversity strikes, throwing unexpected detours in your way.

As for my story, it continues as I write this column. I had to reset. My first calibration was to get my emotions in check. The frustration, disappointment, and stress drained my ability to focus and problem-solve. For me, revival comes from an aggressive daily workout, so I turned to spin class and personal training to vent my negative emotions and find balance.

Next, I had to work the controllables by cementing a back-up plan and firm deadlines for final decisions. There are lots of moving parts to holding a successful event that you don’t get to rehearse, and I needed the logistics to work out with or without the BIC—I had to establish a solid Plan B that would keep the Gen Now Retreat running smoothly.

Finally, I’m staying connected through regular check-ins with my BIC colleagues. We’ll track progress and make a final go/no-go decision mid-month. Until then, I’ll be fierce optimist for our Plan A.

To BIC or not to BIC? That is the question. Stay tuned to the DLE Portal for details.

Keep soaring!
Hurricane Dorian's 200 mph winds were destroying our neighbors in the Bahamas—but somehow, South Florida went mostly unscathed. Just a short boat ride away, Bahamians were going through hell, while all Floridians had to deal with was wind, waves, minor flooding, and power outages from Dorian's outer bands.

When I see the images coming from the island now, I am speechless. I can't help but think, "That could have been us." Before I write about what it was like covering this storm, I want to provide links to help those in the Bahamas. My station is partnering with the Bahama Paradise Cruise Line to bring relief to the island right now. More info here. The Red Cross is also a trusted place to donate. The Bahamian Government has provided instructions to wire transfer money to their hurricane relief fund.

The days leading up to Hurricane Dorian's landfall were full of anxiety. I truly think the anticipation was the hardest part. For several days, Dorian's track showed landfall either in Palm Beach County, or right above it. I had never experienced a hurricane before—let alone reported live in one—and this one was a Cat 5.

I was scared. I was stressed. I did my best to what you're supposed to: stocking up on supplies, filling my gas tank, making plans for my family. My fiancé and I talked about potential evacuations for him and our cats. I had to smile when friends, family, and viewers suggested I evacuate, too. When you're a reporter, leaving is not an option. When a hurricane is coming, our jobs are never more important.

The week before the storm, my station was continuously offering updates and doing stories about preparations. My role in the newsroom was to pull in elements from all of our day’s coverage and create an all-encompassing summary story for our affiliates around the country to run. One day, I did about 18 live shots in a row and spoke for nearly 3 hours straight.

As the hurricane got closer, my station put together a coverage plan for what's called "wall-to-wall" or non-stop news coverage. Right before and during the storm, we were on the air 24/7, providing continuous weather updates, breaking news items, and reports live in the field from locations throughout our viewing area.
I was sent to Port Saint Lucie, about an hour north of West Palm Beach—one of the areas expected to be the hardest hit if Dorian didn't turn. Our staff was split into a morning crew and an evening crew, working 12 hours on and 12 hours off. The morning staff started at 2 a.m. and worked until 2 p.m. The evening crew picked up the show at 2 p.m. and went until 2 a.m.

When my continuous coverage shift started at 2 p.m. Monday, we were just starting to feel some of the impacts of Dorian’s bands. It was so ominous to look at the radar and see the hurricane hugging our coast, only to stall and stop a few miles away. My photographer, Max, and I got into the groove of finding elements, going live, feeding back footage, and moving again. We captured everything from pre-storm kite surfers, strong winds, coastal flooding, a deserted downtown—even a live interview with our Congressman while he was visiting first responders under the radar.

There was little time to think, eat, or take a break. It wasn't until the end of my shift at 2 a.m. that I realized I hadn't had a bathroom break in 15 hours. I'm being 100% serious. 15. Hours.

The next day, conditions were more intense. Winds were in tropical storm force range, and waves were crashing at Jensen Beach. The rain, wind, and salt water proved to be too much for our camera equipment that afternoon. We eventually lost our live shot and started to experience all kind of technical problems. At a certain point, all we could do was record reports, import them into a laptop, establish an internet connection with the station, and send my report back via an FTP site. It felt like everything that could go wrong was going wrong—but again, there just wasn't time to dwell on it. We just kept working with what we had and moving on to the next thing.

A few days later, the newsroom is slowly getting back into a more normal routine, doing follow up stories about local damage and relief efforts to aid the Bahamas. I'm tired, but at the same time, my adrenaline is still running high. I now feel much more prepared for the next time a hurricane is forecast to come our way—having leftover supplies on hand, and the experience of continuous coverage behind me.

I think our news team as a whole rose to the occasion. Even though I haven't been working here all that long, I've never been prouder of CBS12. We did our best—and we got lucky when that monster storm finally made its turn.

Read more about Danielle’s experience covering Hurricane Dorian on her blog.
When Mike Mathis was in law school, he never imagined his career would take him to the casino. After he settled down and started a family in Las Vegas, he didn’t think he’d end up moving to Massachusetts a few years later. And he never predicted—or asked for—a promotion to President and COO of MGM Springfield Casino Resort and Hotel.

But Mike has never second-guessed his skills, passions, and career path that led him to this unexpected place.

“I think one thing that’s been true throughout my career is some of the best opportunities are ones that you’re not necessarily looking for,” he explained. “It’s always a balance of being goal oriented and open minded. Be open and well-positioned to walk through any doors that open for you.”

When he was in law school, he remembers a professor saying the average attorney would have seven employers throughout their career. Mike thought he’d be the exception to that rule, and assumed he would get into criminal law and stay with one firm until he retired.

Instead, his career path has taken many unexpected turns.

Mike went from criminal to commercial trial work, from corporate to transactional work, and then started to develop an interest in business.

A few years into his career, he was seeking a change in geography and lifestyle. While visiting an old classmate in Las Vegas, he learned more about gaming and imagined how his skill set could apply to that industry.

He took a job as an in-house lawyer and eventually went from corporate legal work to operations, project development, and government affairs.

All of these moves could have been a gamble—but Mike let his passions and interests lead the way. When he was tapped to lead MGM’s new casino in Springfield, Mass., it was a big decision for Mike and his family, but he accepted—in part, because of how passionate he was about the project.

“I did not lobby for the job internally, but because of the time I spent on the ground, my management thought it would develop me professionally. They knew I had seen Springfield's plans since day one, when it was just a pile of dirt and a pencil sketch,” he said.

Today, a few years into this unexpected leadership position, Mike says he “couldn't be happier”—but that doesn't mean it's been without challenges.
In its first year in business, the casino fell short of its projected gross gaming revenues.

It was a disappointment, but Mike realized, “it’s important for me to stay positive to lead the team through it.”

Looking ahead to year two, Mike is working to gather as much information as possible. “There are areas we are over-performing in, and areas where we are under-performing,” he explained. His plan now is to speak to customers, get feedback about the business, and ultimately better understand the market trends and the competition.

When you’re dealt a bad hand, facing an unexpected disappointment, Mike’s advice is to never fold—use it as an opportunity to learn and grow.

As he advises, “All you can do is take in all the data, all the feedback, to try and improve. Then, you do more of what's working, less of what's not. Recalibrate. Learn from your customers. The whole time, stay really positive.”

Mike Mathis will speak at the 2019 DLE Gen Now Retreat on the topic, How to Set, Communicate and Achieve Goals.

Coaching: How do you Know When to Pick your Battles?

Thanks to multi-year DLE Retreat Alum Charles Lerner of TAO Cares for asking the question AND to 2019 DLE Retreat Speaker Captain Scott Smith of the Naval War College for providing this advice:

The first step is to know yourself—what are you willing to accept, and what can you not tolerate. With that knowledge, you can evaluate the situation with clear boundaries. Next, differentiate whether the situation is a choice or a dilemma.

A choice is between right and wrong. The vast majority of people are good, so this situation does not present itself too often. If it does, seek greater context. Perhaps you are not fully aware of all of the information; alternatively, the decision-maker may be missing a piece of the puzzle that you can provide. Help them.

Good followership—an understated part of leadership—requires a sense of loyalty to the organization’s mission or goal. When a decision is inconsistent with that firm’s goal, you have the duty to point it out.
Chasing a Dream and Discovering My Niche
By Dan Clemens, professional pitcher, author, consultant, and long-time DLE community member

After my third opportunity to pitch for the Tucson Saguaros baseball team, I took a hike along the California coast and reflected on the relative success I had at this level—albeit with a small sample size of 8-1/3 innings.

As the oldest player on the field—in fact, the only player alive when Neil Armstrong landed on the moon, joked the (punishing) announcer—I had to play the game different than my teammates and opponents.

At 75 mph, I throw the baseball just hard enough that the other team’s hitter has to respect the fastball, but if they’re looking for it, they’ll pound it. If I threw slower, the hitter would have more time to adjust—I’d get pounded. If I threw harder, the adjustment would be minor—I’d still get pounded.

That’s where my slider, curve, and changeup came into play. My slider looks enough like a fastball that, for a limited number of at-bats, it will momentarily fool some hitters. Same with my changeup. There’s enough difference in speed that it can be effective, but if I threw slower, there wouldn’t be enough variation in speed—I’d get pounded.

However, my knuckle-curve is an anomaly.

This league is filled with young flamethrowers who believe the solution to any problem is to rear back and throw harder. I was perhaps the only guy throwing a big, breaking curve ball that starts at the shoulder and ends up at the knees on the other side of the plate. Like a calm little eddy in a big, rushing, rapid-filled river, I carved out a small area where I could be effective.

This is a great life lesson: Find a niche where you can be successful and make it your own. It’s what I’ve done in my professional career. It doesn’t mean I don’t learn, grow, and try new things—rather it’s the realization that I don’t have to be good at everything or be all things to all people.

It’s okay to be different, to have a unique style that doesn’t conform.

It’s okay to say, “No, that’s not me.”

Find that sweet spot and ride it ‘til it bucks ya!
Expecting the Unexpected on the Campaign Trail
By Anna Worley, Systems Engineer at General Dynamics Mission Systems

DLE Community Member Patrick Kavey, a Pittsfield (MA) native, is running for a hotly-contested Council seat in his hometown. His seat encompasses Ward 5—the largest and most rural ward in the city.

As part of his campaign outreach, Patrick knocked on 919 doors, taking time to explain his story and goals to each person who answered. This paid off with 409 of the 868 votes cast—and a spot on the November ballot. This month alone, Patrick has knocked 300-some more doors, and he plans to knock on an additional 1000 before November’s election.

In this interview with DLE newcomer correspondent Anna Worley, Patrick reveals his tips for making instant in-person connections.

Q. What made you run for City Council?
I felt there was not enough here for young people. Our young people are intelligent, but they’re not being given the tools and the opportunities they need here. Having been away from the Berkshires for several years, I returned to find a shortage of jobs in my field, and the jobs that were available offered low compensation. My goal is for employers to give people the opportunity to work with a livable wage and benefits.

Q. How do you make an instant connection with strangers when you knock on their door?
When you go door-to-door, you have to do everything you can to be relatable to that specific person in the most honest way. I’m not going to walk up to a door with a Green Bay Packers flag and say I’m Packers fan. I am going to go up and say, “I follow football, this is what I am a fan of, and this is what you are a fan of,” as a way to break the ice with them and then talk policy. It is not that difficult as long as you do your best to resonate with something that the individual appreciates and likes.

Q. Is there a difference between your first door and your 900th door?
Before the preliminary, people didn’t know who I was. I had to sell myself—who I am, why I’m running, and what I want to accomplish. Now, people know me as the candidate going door-to-door. The opposing candidate has not been to any doors, and people seem to respect me for what I’m doing. They have questions for me, and we are focused on what we can do together, not who I am.

Q. What is one of your best stories from knocking on doors?
My best day was before the preliminary. I was knocking on so many doors that I lost my voice. I didn’t want to leave that impression on people—my scratchy voice—but I kept going anyway. The first house that we knocked on that day was a beautiful old Victorian with so much character. An elderly woman answered the door, and she started shaking when she saw me. She had read about me in the local newspaper and was so shocked that I was at her door. She hugged me and told me how happy she was that I was there. I hadn’t been feeling my best, but she gave me the motivation to get through the entire day. It ended up being our best day knocking on doors. I want my campaign to give hope to others, but what you don’t realize is the hope and motivation others give you.
Q. What tips do you have to make connections with people quickly?

1. **Conquer your fears.** You are the only one saying that you can’t do it. That is something you need to overcome. I had to step out of my comfort zone to become successful at the things I’m now the most successful at. Once you start doing those things, you realize there is so much more you can do. Once you conquer your fears, you can do anything.

2. **Listen to learn.** A significant part of communicating effectively is to be able to actively listen to others—not just their words, but their body language, too. I’ve taken courses in nonverbal communication, and I look to people’s body language to figure out what they are thinking and feeling. If someone had very cross posture (crossed arms or legs), I would change my body language to make it more open and soften the tone and open the discussion.

3. **Put in the hard work.** A huge reason I have been so successful knocking on doors is because of the hard work that I have put into it. It is important to give anyone who gives you their time the same amount of time and respect back. Show them that you care about what they are saying, and then they will listen to you as well.

4. **Roll with the punches.** Not everyone will embrace you. Accept that, and always be respectful, even if the response is not what you hoped for. If someone comes at you aggressively, for example, remain calm, kind, and patient. Listen and make eye contact to show you are present. You have seven seconds to make your first impression with someone—don’t let an emotional response ruin your opportunity to leave the impression you want to present.

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**FIT TO LEAD**

**Ride the WAVE to Harness Your Emotions**

*By April Roche, DLE’18, Director of Clinical Services at Hillcrest Educational Centers.*

The feelings that come with unexpected situations at work or when we feel like the results we were trying to produce just didn’t meet the mark can complicated. Keeping a balance between the rational and emotional centers of our brain can be key to helping us to avoid self-doubt, which has a way of stripping us of our confidence and courage. It can make a complicated career situation even worse.

In addition to things like exercise and volunteering, quiet time to re-read a favorite author—or to find new inspiration through any type of media—can be just the prescription we need. Recently, I found inspiration in stumbling across this quote:

“Courage doesn’t always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says I’ll try again tomorrow.” Mary Anne Radmacher

I offer it not only as cheerleading for times when you find yourself losing your professional courage, but to also challenge you to seek out your own simple inspirations when dealing with the hurdles that inevitably come up along the path to professional development.
Autumn Edition

By Jesse Noll, DLE ’16 & ’18, Senior Associate, Integrated Planning & Custom Content & Experiences at Wavemaker

While it still feels like summertime here in NYC, and fall days have been resistant to making an appearance, this month’s mix embraces the true essence of autumn while also leaning a little into Halloween. Part of me just wanted to make this month’s mix exclusively songs from Kim Petras’ Halloween-inspired album, Turn Off The Light, but that would’ve been too easy!

I love this time of year—especially since over the next couple months I have a lot of great things planned. As I write this, I'm on my way to JFK to spend some time with friends exploring Nashville. Then, in November, we have this year’s DLE Gen Now Retreat (can’t wait to see some of you there!). After that, I go directly to Syracuse to give a guest lecture about my career, and then I’m celebrating my birthday later in November with a trip across the West Coast, visiting Seattle, LA, and other parts of southern California.

It’s a busy time of year, but I love autumn, and this one is going to be one to remember. Let’s kick it off on a high note with some amazing tunes!

Happy listening, ghouls! 🎃

Enjoy this month’s playlist and the changing of the seasons. Happy Listening!

Book Selections from our Community

DLE community members give their recommendations and the reasons that make these books must-reads.

Recommendation: The Art of War by Sun Tzu

The importance of building an effective and cohesive unit is a central theme of this ancient military strategy text. I find it is a helpful exercise to translate concepts from the text into the everyday habit, communication, and actions that define a company’s culture. Another theme I admire is the emphasis on preparation and timing—preparation is in your control; timing is out of your control. Focusing on what one can control and reading the situation for the right moment is a skill I am constantly trying to improve.
Driving Innovation at Anheuser-Busch

2018 DLE Gen Now Retreat alum Lexi Aruck talks about her recent experience moving up at Anheuser-Busch InBev. Starting next month, Lexi leaves her current position of Packaging Quality Manager at the company’s Baldwinsville (NY) Brewery and heads to St. Louis to drive innovation.

I’m moving to our zone corporate office to be a project manager for innovations, with the title of Management Systems Specialist. I’ll manage our new product roll outs from the highest viewpoint.

The interview process was a great learning experience for me. I’ve known for a while that I wanted to make a change—to get out of the brewery and direct manufacturing. I saw an Innovations Acceleration Project Manager position listed internally, and I realized that I met nearly all of the qualifications, with the exception of direct brewing experience.

I interviewed for the position, and two weeks later asked to interview with a different set of people within the Innovations department. To my surprise, this interview was for a different position entirely.

My internal career profile lists my interest to move into the marketing/commercial field, a change that I’ve been very vocal about. Because of that, among other things, the Innovations Team presented me with a different position that they thought better suited my goals. The position would nurture a relationship with the commercial team and could make the transition between the supply and commercial functions more seamless.

In my new job, I will be managing our new product creation and deployments from a supply perspective, interfacing with the commercial team and managing at the highest level, at the beginning stages of the projects. The best part of this move is that I will have direct exposure to the senior leaders of the company, and I’ll be a contributing member of the fastest growing team within it: Innovations.

Moving to a new city by myself is incredibly nerve wracking, but also so exciting. I’m lucky to have lived in St. Louis previously, so I know which neighborhoods to target and understand generally what kind of vibe the city has. I’ll be leaving my family and boyfriend in New York, but they’ve all been so incredibly supportive that the transition was an easy decision—one that I needed to do for my career and overall happiness.

Essential tips for managing your own career

Diana Peterson-More of the Organizational Effectiveness Group, LLC advises us to “be both strategic and tactical” in your career, and offers her tips for doing so in her article for SmartBrief.
Rising to New Career Challenges

Andrew Diamond, DLE Retreat ‘10-11, has moved into a new role and company, stepping up as Manager, Sports Partnerships and Marketing at SiriusXM. Based in SiriusXM’s New York City office, he is working on various partnerships and sponsorships ranging from brands, to teams, to leagues, across several sports channels on SiriusXM, including Barstool Sports, Fantasy Sports, Mad Dog Radio, and NASCAR, among others.

After almost 3 years at Hilti, Tiffany Chu, DLE Retreat ‘14, was recruited into the Operational Technology Project Management Organization of McKesson, which distributes pharmaceuticals and provides health information technology, medical supplies, and care management tools. At McKesson, Tiffany will be able to build a team from the ground up and work on a five-year cybersecurity initiative, all while challenging herself to learn a new side of technology.

Dale Osef, DLE Retreat ‘18, became the Assistant Director of Career Development at University of Massachusetts, Amherst. In this new role, he supports informatics and computer sciences students with their career development. He also will be involved with employer networking and recruitment efforts, co-supervising a team of student career developers.

Chris Smith, DLE Retreat ‘18, takes on a new career challenge as the Associate General Counsel at the Cannabis Control Commission, moving from the Berkshires to Natick, MA. Chris says he’ll be straddling work assignments in Boston and Worcester.

Sean Fernandez, DLE Retreat ‘15, recently accepted a job offer at Spotify as a Senior Analyst in their Licensing Finance team. In this role, Sean provides analysis and insights on the deals and royalty contracts between Spotify and the music labels and publishers. Sean has been learning so much about the music industry and finds the new position a great change of pace.
Berkshire 25 Celebration Shines the Spotlight on the DLE

The vibrancy and vitality of the DLE radiated at the September 5th celebration of Berkshire 25 honorees. An energetic contingency of DLE community members cheered DLE Founder and Executive Director Linda Dulye as she received her award during an outdoor ceremony at Berkshire Botanical Garden. The Berkshire 25 honorees are selected by Berkshire Magazine for pouring “their passion into everything they do for the region.”

When Work Becomes Play

Jane Hong, DLE ’15; Faculty ’16, traveled to a beautiful beach on a private resort island in the Maldives—the best part, she traveled to this idyllic location for work! Jane went on behalf of Westbrook Inc., accompanying Will & Jada Pinkett Smith to help capture content on their vacation and direct a marketing piece for their son’s water brand, JUST. In between working, Jane accompanied Will on a scuba diving adventure—she might not have been the best at it, but she tried! She also joined the family for a sunset dinner on a neighboring private island.

That's Jane pictured with the Smith family on one of Jada Pinkett Smith’s Instagram stories!
Memorable Quotes

“Communication, collaboration, writing and quantitative analysis.”
- Wayfair CEO and Co-Founder Niraj Shah citing the core skills his company hires for while speaking Oct. 2nd at the Economic Development Policy Summit in Pittsfield, MA.

Articles

Your Boss Doesn’t Communicate with You—Now What?
From Forbes

Your Boss Hates You. What do you do?
From CNN Business

Lakers’ Trainer says Kobe ‘Wasn’t the Most Talented Guy Out There’—Here’s Why He Succeeded
From CNBC

5 Things to Stop Doing on LinkedIn Immediately
From Forbes

Podcast

Computer Science Professors Says We Can Probably Make Email Better For Everyone
From NPR
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