

# Extraordinary Business: Just call me Dave

Meeting J. David Power III



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## *Meeting J. Dave Power III*

[J. David Power III](#) of [J.D. Power and Associates](#) spoke at The Entrepreneurial Summit Southeast put on by [TiE \(atlanta.tie.org\)](#). It was an amazing opportunity: to see one of America's true entrepreneurs speak about his history and the making of an iconic American company.

Mr. Power began his company in 1968, with the support of his wife, literally in his kitchen, with a vision of providing car manufacturers with customer satisfaction data that manufacturers could use to increase their customer service and to provide a reliable source of data directly from the end users. Over time, the company's reputation and capabilities grew, making J.D. Power and Associates a household name.

Mr. Power seems to be a very humble man, and seems to keep the idea of doing things a bit better at the forefront of his thinking. As he discussed his interests, beginning at [Ford](#), he discussed his interest in making Ford a better company, and his aspirations of getting into the marketing arm of the company. He relayed that he was not given an opportunity to move into the marketing arm of the company, and subsequently quit the company to start his own company. He didn't allow the speed bump to slow him.



Later, after he'd started his company, he decided that he wanted to work with the then fledgling and new to the US, [Toyota](#) motorcar company. He was unable to get the interview he wanted with Mr. Toyota, and thus, found a way around the "front door" of the company to get their business. He didn't see the obstacle as a speed bump rather than a barrier to entry.

Some takeaways from the event that hold true for entrepreneurs - aspiring and experienced, are the following:

- Perseverance - a vision is something that is in the future. It is not something that is based on "the natural flow of things," meaning that if you just keep

heading in a general direction, you might get there. Many visions aren't achieved because people that create the visions get tired or distracted or just plain give up before the vision has an opportunity materialize. Others start out on a path and don't have a vision...they just move along in a non-specific direction and hope it works out for the best. In order to persevere, you've got to know where you are going. Otherwise, you might as well stand still.

- A genuine interest in doing the right thing - Mr. Power seemed to have a “values” streak in him in which he measured all of his activities against. He created for himself a position of power, wherein he could potentially skew numbers to look any way, dependent on who was willing to pay the most for the final outcome. From the very first days, he relayed the fact that he was approached with that very offer, and immediately chose not to. Values aren't created on the spot - they are established throughout life. In an organization, wherein there will be different values amongst different people, it become apparent that establishing and committing to writing down company values is essential for ensuring uniform communications and activities throughout the organization.
- Focus - Mr. Power is committed to his company's purpose: to provide excellent customer satisfaction data. The firms that purchase the data from J. D. Power and Associates know that the data is reliable, quality, relevant and timely data. Consumers are influenced by J. D. Power and Associates recommendations and may adjust their purchasing habits as a result. This is the effect of being clear about the company's focus and direction and sticking to it. A company must be clear about its focus: what it does, what it will offer its audience and must be diligent about delivering the product or service, consistently.
- Integrity - Integrity is more than doing the right thing; it is being known for doing the right thing, every time. Mr. Power was only interested in honest business dealings, and treated people that he worked with - be it in his office, or the people who were answering his surveys, with integrity. He made a practice of rewarding people for answering the surveys, realizing that it was taking some time out of their valuable lives. In order for his company to gain



the reputation it has, for providing excellent data, his company had to be known as one of integrity. Otherwise, people and businesses would not value the information and thus, would not purchase from him. In building an extraordinary company, this must be foundational to company values.

- Building relationships: Toward the end of his talk, Mr. Power, at 77 years old, relayed the fact that he had just returned from Japan, where he had visited with his old friend, Mr. Toyota. From what I gathered, Mr. Power and Mr. Toyota must have been friends for more than 40 years (The company started in 1968, Toyota was one of his first clients, per Mr. Power). Powerful relationships speak to the character and integrity of a man. Powerful business relationships also speak to the character and integrity of a business. Relationships take effort and time, trust and honor and above all, transparency. Every business and business leader is part of a community. Building relationships in the community is essential for business success. Building strong relationships and making this a business practice is essential to a community.
- Uncompromising commitment to quality- When Mr. Power was being introduced, the presenter mentioned that he was having trouble putting something together to say about Mr. Power. His 11 year old daughter said to him, while preparing for the introduction, "What are you going to say about Mr. Power? Everyone already knows about him." A company doesn't become a household name by doing most of the job most of the time. A business must be fully committed to its craft at all times in order to grow an extraordinary business like J.D. Power and Associates.

The most amazing thing about Mr. Power is that despite his great successes and experiences, he seems to be an extremely humble man. Everyone was to address him as "Dave." People that wanted an audience with him just called him, "Dave," and he gave them the audience. I saw him passing someone his email address. I sat behind him in a class later in the day, and greeted him casually shortly thereafter. He seemed genuine, honest and open and has a heart that truly wants to help. I could not be more impressed with that man. He is an extraordinary leader who grew and extraordinary business.

*About the Author: Rick Meekins is passionate about helping business leaders start, run and grow extraordinary businesses. Mr. Meekins is the Founder & Principal at Aepiphanni: The Business Strategy People, a boutique consulting firm based in Metro Atlanta, Ga. Aepiphanni is a Business Strategy Consulting Firm dedicated to providing leadership and direction in the areas of operations, communications, branding, leadership and marketing. Their work has helped*

*business owners expand their businesses, increase revenues, reduce costs and pursue sustainable futures.*

*Mr. Meekins is a strong believer in alignment between people, purpose, passion and pursuit. He believes that people working in alignment with their individual purposes is the foundation for successful businesses and successful communities. For further information, please contact Aepiphanni directly, at 678-265-3908, email them at [info@aepiphanni.com](mailto:info@aepiphanni.com), or visit their website at <http://www.aepiphanni.com>.*