

Hal Krause

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Alumnews Editor



Hal Krause, BA'62

It was called American Salesmasters; it was one of the first companies in the country to hold rallies for business people, bringing in business leaders to make presentations. His first difficulty was getting well-known people to agree to speak. For help he called on a former fraternity brother, James Watt (BS '60, Commerce, JD '62, Law) who was an administrative assistant for Milward Simpson BA '21. Simpson not only agreed to speak for Krause, he also helped get commitments from others eminent speakers, such as Paul Harvey and Norman Vincent Peale.

By the end of the 1960s, more than 50,000 people were attending his seminars each year. But the company was not a great financial success until he had the idea of recording, then filming, then videotaping the presentations, which he could then distribute to a much larger audience. This turned out to be very popular, and the company expanded to the international marketplace. When Krause sold the company in the 1980s, it had expanded into 17 countries. Many of the materials the company generated Krause donated to the UW and are held in the American Heritage Center.

Next he spent a few years in politics, with two terms on the Republican National Committee and one run for the U.S. House of Representatives (unsuccessful - "thank God for unanswered prayers," he says).

In 1987, Krause returned to entrepreneurship and launched a new company. It was a video-based management training system that worked in conjunction with live facilitation called Crestcom. Subjects were business related: how to interview employees, how to conduct effective staff meetings. Through its franchises, the company today is active in 50 countries and operates in 25 languages; it is the leading management training fran-

chise in the world. In the last 10 years, more than 28 Crestcom licenses in 12 different countries, including Mexico, India and Peru, have achieved lifetime sales of more than \$1 million.

With that one up and running, Krause started another company. "In 1998 we decided to take some things we'd learned about technology and educating adults and expand it to children's education," Krause says. The company was called FasTracKids, and it has been recognized as one of the fastest growing franchise systems ever, with 250 academies in 35 countries. The idea behind the company was to provide accelerated learning for three- to six-year-old children by putting renowned educators' curriculums on videos and DVDs, then projecting them onto an interactive white board, which operates like a computer. Krause's own research suggested that those particular years are the most important for learning, he says; by age eight, about 80 percent of the brain's neural wiring is completed.

Communication plays a big part of the curriculum; he gets children started in public speaking at age three. He calls his system "enrichment learning for tomorrow's leaders."

Helping tomorrow's leaders is the impetus behind several of Krause's

activities outside of work too, such as serving as a board member for the National Association of Street Schools, which establishes schools for street kids throughout the U.S. He also established a scholarship for high school students while serving on the National Republican Committee - a speaking competition, the theme of which was America, the land of opportunity.

In his downtime, Krause is an avid tennis player and fisherman; he just returned from a fishing trip north of the Arctic Circle, where he caught a 40-pound trout. He also spends a lot of time with his family. Every Sunday, he and his wife, Elaine, have a family lunch with their four children, who all work for his companies and live within 10 minutes of each other in Denver. When everyone is present, including grandchildren, they are a party of 18.

These activities, as well as running his international businesses, will continue to be on Krause's calendar as he goes on pursuing the goals that drive him. "I want to see that other kids have the same kinds of opportunities that I had," Krause says. "Both of my companies are related to that." He pauses. "And I want to catch a 50-pound trout."

In Australian newspaper, The Melbourne Age, once wrote: "It is said in the international business community that Hal Krause has done more to influence how business is done worldwide than any other person of his generation."

Krause showed he had big plans early on. After grade school in Cheyenne and high school in Douglas and Upton, he came to the University of Wyoming to set in motion his plan to become an attorney. He majored in American studies and pledged ATO, where future governor Mike Sullivan (BSPE '61, Petroleum Engineering, JD '64, Law) was his pledge father. But by the second semester of his sophomore year, he was broke; he didn't think he'd be able to finish his degree.

Krause took his problem to the dean of men, who told Krause he could continue his education and run a tab with the university, though he wouldn't receive any credits or a diploma until the tab was paid. The dean also suggested Krause find a part-time job. "He said, 'I think you'd be good at selling,'" Krause recalls.

That seemed like a good idea, so Krause began selling pots and pans and china as a part-time traveling salesman. "To the best of my knowledge, I traversed every major road in the state of Wyoming," Krause says. "It was a totally different experience than what my kids could experience today. People would say, 'Oh you're a student, come in and have a meal,' or invite me to spend the night." He was able to stay in school and finish his degree, and by the time he graduated in 1962, he had 100 students working for him. He earned \$35,000 that year. It was a learning experience too: during this time, he became convinced that communication skills were crucial for people who wanted to become leaders.

He got some more good advice when he started law school at George Washington University. During his first semester, a Washington newspaper wrote a story about Krause, who had continued to sell his pots and pans. "Then one of my professors told me, 'Lots of people can become attorneys, but not many people are natural entrepreneurs.' He felt that I was one of them." Krause took his exams at the end of the first semester of law school, and the next day he started his first company.

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