

**Maximizing Results Through People**  
**A CEO to CEO Quarterly Newsletter**

**8/15/06**

**The End of an Era**

Dear Fellow CEO:

As many of you know who have worked directly with me or who have read these missives, I am happily married and have three sons. When our eldest, Jacob, was moving into junior high school, I presented him with an opportunity. In the summer between his junior and senior years in high school, he and I would explore anyplace in the world together for 3 weeks. It could be a geographic trip, a trip satisfying a special interest, a trip where he could use the language skills he'd learned in school – really, he could create whatever trip he'd like to have and we'd experience it together. This would be a trip without a mom or brothers – just man to man – a way to come to know each other better and to get better acquainted with the world at large. He said it sounded like fun, and that was the beginning of a tradition.

Jacob, whose P. I. profile includes highest D high A, can have a hard time making decisions. At the start of his junior year I began asking, "Where do you think you want to go on our trip?" He couldn't decide. August, September, October, November – it was starting to get to the point where mileage points would no longer buy plane tickets – so, I took him to the local Barnes and Noble store. I led him to the travel section and directed, "Here are all the places we can go. Let me know when you've picked one. I'll be listening to music." Ten minutes later he grabbed me and announced we were going to Australia.

We had the good fortune of having a client and friend who is an Aussie. We met with Leigh and asked, "If you had 3 weeks to spend in Australia, what would you do to pack in as much fun and learn as much about your homeland as possible?" And Leigh suggested an itinerary from which we didn't stray significantly. When the time came, we flew into Sidney visiting there a couple of days. Then we flew to Melbourne, herded sheep with Leigh's uncle in a sheep station (Jake's first effort riding a motorcycle, too); visited the 12 Apostles, visited wine country (and got Jake a little tipsy), took the overnight train from Adelaide to Alice Springs; camped for several days in the outback; flew to Darwin, spent several more days around Kakadu National Park with the birds and crocs; flew to Cairns; took a boat to a resort island near the Great Barrier Reef, visited with the big fishes before coming home.

It was a fantastic trip which Jacob and I reminisce about regularly. We got to know each other in a way that fathers and sons seldom have the opportunity to do. It was a bonding experience we'll never lose and never forget.

Brandon, our second son, didn't have any hesitation deciding on his vacation – he knew exactly what he wanted to do. He wanted to experience the best theatre in the world. So, our itinerary took us in an entirely different direction. We started at the Shaw Festival at Niagara on the Lake in Canada. In the space of two days, we saw five plays. Then, we went to New York. We saw the original "The Producers" in preview with Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick; as well as "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" with Gary Sinise – along with a half dozen others. After each play, Brandon would hang out at the theatre stage door hunting for autographs while I'd wait at our uptown hotel with a glass of wine in anticipation of his story – who did he see, who signed (all of the above) – just happy to share his excitement. From New York we flew to London and saw another half dozen plays over several days including an exciting version of Macbeth at the restored Old Globe. Yes, we walked around London, but on this trip, the play was the thing. From London, we took the train to Edinburgh for the Edinburgh / Fringe Festivals. Over the course of about a week, we saw close to 40 events – from a British production of Glengarry Glen Ross to a mind reader to stand up to... well, we saw lots of stuff.

When we came home, we were both exhausted. We were also bonded – we had shared three weeks of dad / son time that will never be taken away from us. We each grew from the experience.

Bob Wilson & Associates, Inc.

PI Worldwide 

P.O. Box 3039  
Carmel, IN 46082

Phone: 317-574-1550  
Fax: 317-844-6267

[www.bobwilsonconsulting.com](http://www.bobwilsonconsulting.com)

Our youngest, Reid, selected Ireland early in his process. After taking a tandem bicycle trip of about 150 miles last summer as a preview, he decided we'd explore Ireland by tandem. I write this after recently returning – 500 miles of cycling over three weeks – another great trip.

The highlight, in retrospect, was the lowlight at the time. Let me share the story.

We flew into Shannon and took a bus to Galway where we recuperated for a day before beginning our journey. We cycled south, traveled through the Burren, completed the Ring of Kerry and traveled northeast towards Dublin. We left our longest, most difficult cycling day until just before Dublin. We would cycle from Carlow up the Wicklow gap and on to Wicklow town – about 50 miles – but also traveling from sea level up into and across the Wicklow Mountains.

The weather on our trip had been terrific to this point. We had very little rain the first week of cycling and only a couple of days where it rained at all. And the temperatures were generally warm – touching the 80's a couple of days, but mostly in the 60's and 70's. The weather forecast for the fateful day was cool, with rain to begin around noon, eventually accompanied by gale force winds and potential accumulations of two inches per hour in the afternoon. With 420 miles behind us (as was an 80 pound trailer), we knew we'd be able to make it – regardless of the circumstances.

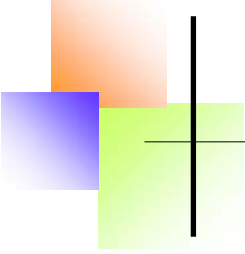
And there were **other** circumstances besides the weather. Over the past 420 miles our equipment had degraded significantly. The second set of gears (for particularly steep grades) got bent around Cashel (another story entirely), and we couldn't fix them or get them fixed – so we only had the highest set of gears. Then, we blew a tire on the trailer in Kilkenny that we also couldn't get fixed, but which we felt would work so long as we didn't hit any major potholes.

So, we began our voyage to Wicklow town at 7:30 that morning with black clouds looming to our rear and a bike that may not have been ready for the trip. But the riders were ready, willing, and able. After about 30 miles of rolling hills, we stopped for a snack before making the turn for Wicklow Gap. As we exited the convenience store chomping on candy bars, the rain began – steady and cold. Our next three miles went straight up. We were in the lowest gear we had, standing, straining and moving at a slow walking pace. We'd have to stop about every hundred yards panting for breath, wet from sweat on the inside and rain from the outside. Eventually, the road flattened out to a reasonable grade – though it was still up and up and up some more. The rain came down harder and harder as the wind picked up. We knew the Wicklow gap would be just around the corner – but it felt like we were in the Twilight Zone – the corner didn't come.

That is, until we came over a hill and saw a deep valley below us. We'd have to coast down before we went up again. We looked at each other with disgust. Oh No! And the rain and wind just continually got worse.

The valley we descended was only half of what we'd previously ascended. We coasted down and began the long trek back up into the mountains. As we approached Wicklow Gap, we went above tree line. The wind was so strong and we were moving so slowly, we had to walk the bike – it just wouldn't stand straight at two miles per hour in a gale force crosswind. As we trudged, the rain pelted us like thousands of BB's. The temperature was about 40, but we were working too hard to feel cold.

At about 2:30 pm with no end in sight, Reid begged, "Dad, let's just stop and lay down for a while." I told him if we lay down, we might not get back up. And I was serious. Slogging step after slow, painful step, we eventually saw the sign saying we'd reached the Wicklow Gap (keep in mind, this is one of the biggest tourist areas in Ireland – and there were virtually no cars – that's how lousy the weather was). Once we finally started our descent, the stinging rain in our faces didn't matter. We'd made it. Now we were receiving the reward of the 60 mph fly down the mountain. We were exhausted, soaked, and pounded by more rain, but the conquest of the mountain was exhilarating nonetheless.



Until this point, the road downward had been relatively straight. We bulleted past a road sign announcing – “Severe Bend Ahead”. The brakes didn’t catch. I squeezed as hard as I could. I pumped. I squeezed some more. Nothing happened. I yelled back at Reid, “Guess what? We don’t have brakes.” Neither of us had the energy to be afraid. We came into the bend using all the road and avoiding a trip down into oblivion (thank God there were no cars coming the other way). We continued careening downward. After a couple more minutes of this, just working the brakes – trying to avoid the side of the mountain – we got things under control. Shortly thereafter, we pulled into Wicklow.

We had survived. After that, the ride to Dublin was a breeze. We eventually came home.

What a great trip! We had our own unique experience that we’ll remember forever and tell stories about for just as long. And likely, each time the story will become more harrowing. Five years from now, I’m sure it will include dodging several cars and having one wheel of the trailer teetering over the cliff.

I share our experiences out of joy as well as sadness. Reid is my youngest son and there will be no more high school trips with the boys. It’s the last time I’ll get to play that role. It’s one more role I’ll get to play as a father, but that particular era is over.

But, it’s an era that I can look back at with pride. What better reason to own a business than to create the opportunity to impact your children in a direct, hands-on way? What more valuable commodity do we have to give to those we love than time? And, if we have the freedom to run a business, shouldn’t we use it to create time for our families to nurture and pass on the power of our love? I believe we should. We owe it to ourselves and to our children and the future generations they will create.

Take time with your families. It is time you and they will never regret. I know I never will.

Thank you for reading.



Bob Wilson, President  
Bob Wilson & Associates, Inc.