

Keith Robinson, Partner and Managing Director

Remember Led Zeppelin, KISS, Twisted Sister and the “hair bands” of the late 70’s and early 80’s? Remember rock operas (Tommy) and bad horror films? If you remember those, you will remember me. My inauspicious music career incorporated heavy metal drumming, writing music, production, a failed rock opera, a low budget horror movie called “Hell Island,” a big moustache and a lot of hair. Thirty years of investment business experience, and significantly less hair, later I have learned a few things which I like to share with others through my work at Focus Consulting.

Here are a few of the key things I learned:

- Trust is the key to all relationships. Whether you are in a band or on a team, trust is the bedrock. Knowing your teammate has your back means the world to me. Building it can be a challenge but can be done. Counting on it means success.
- Enthusiasm and a willingness to learn from failure go a long way. The rock opera never made it to production, some bands weren’t intended to get out of the garage, and similarly there were many times in my “corporate” career leading Human Resource and Development teams that we failed to get ideas (we thought they were good) accepted by others. All of these were lessons in humility and opportunities to learn and improve.
- Communicate, Communicate and then Communicate some more. It got to a point with our bass player (we were in three different bands together) that for us to be in perfect harmony it only took a glance. Sometimes with my kids (I have 5) it only takes a glance to get my point across. It’s always a challenge to rise to that level of communication in business. Good leaders know how to get there and I enjoy seeing it come to pass in my work in the industry.
- Process and Creativity don’t have to be in conflict. As my business partners will tell you, I am a process guy. As my former bandmates would tell you, I am a creative guy. Putting these together is fun, rewarding and helps me connect with a variety of people.

Performing got me comfortable in groups of all sizes. Sometimes we would play in a venue that would seat 300 and we would draw 30. (Hence the comment about some bands never should leave the garage). Whether we were playing for 30, 300 or 3,000 our love of our work would inspire us to bring our best. In my experience with clients and colleagues, the truly exceptional performers always bring their “A” game. Why? Because they love it. A aspire to help business professionals find what they love so they can bring their best. This creates exceptional performance, and I am passionate about helping others perform at their highest level.

Like many others I went to undergrad and grad school. I pursued my MBA in Marketing at the University of Illinois so I could really learn to align my leadership development experience with process and creativity. After twenty five years as “an inside HR/business guy” Focus Consulting represents a second career for me. Over the past 5 years in partnership with the team here, it has been a joy to apply all that I have learned.

Teaching and learning is in my DNA. I come from a family of educators and spent time as a university professor. Helping others discover their talents and gifts is the highest reward I know. Which brings me to my parting thought: having purpose in life keeps you young and alive. My purpose in life: to enlighten others.