



“Now In Our 42nd Year”

From the desk of David Simpson

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“Think and act big and grow smaller or think and act small and grow bigger.”

Herb Kelleher (March 12, 1931 – Jan. 3 2019) Founder, Southwest Airlines

Herb Kelleher started out his career as a chain-smoking, bourbon whisky drinking lawyer. Then, in a rather large career shift, he ultimately became the co-founder and CEO of Southwest Airlines.

Kelleher was certainly a “break-the-mould” executive. He remembered the names of thousands of employees after meeting people once and was also a very hands-on and down-to-earth executive – he would frequently pitch in and help load bags onto planes. His long-term strategic plan was defined as “Doing things” and perhaps it was this approach that gave rise to the unfound rumor that the initial business plan for Southwest Airlines was concocted on a serviette in a San Antonio restaurant. He was adamant about corporate titles having little meaning and described being “tough” as having high expectations and encouraging people to “dig deeper” and reach higher. Everyone mattered to Kelleher. To that point, one of his senior executives complained to Herb that he was more available to mechanics, flight attendants and pilots than to his management team. Herb’s response? “That is because they are more important than you are!” And true to his quote above, he firmly believed that no matter how good things are, do not get too full of yourself and overspend.

Born exactly 95 years ago this month, Kelleher was considered one of the most successful CEO’s of his era and believed that having fun and a sense of humor in business can go hand-in-hand with corporate success.

Perform better!