

Sidharth Srivastava – Introduction

1. A brief background of where I was born, an interesting fact about my childhood and how it relates to what I do now or where I started your career.

I was born and raised in India, and I had a good childhood compared to what I see these days in our society. I experienced two styles of parenting. The first, which my mother displayed, as in her eyes her son cannot do anything wrong.

My dad's behavior, on the other hand, was at the other end of the spectrum. His nature was to bring the perfectionist out of me.

The most important part of my upbringing was the fact that both my parents set in motion certain key principles and values and these provided guidance during difficult times.

My mother's resolute mental strength and my dad's compassionate spirit has always been my source of strength and resilience when I failed.

So who am I ? I am Door Knocker .

2. Has my birthplace or childhood experiences influenced my choice of career ? What made me choose this career path, did my family support my choice?

I set out on this career path to help all including myself, to figure out how to deal with the daily pressure of our personal problems and find a way to **balance** both our professional and personal lives as well as how to enjoy life.

During my naïve days, I strived for perfection, and that taught me a valuable lesson: ***in the pursuit of perfection we create an environment of limitations and expectations.***

Limitations stemmed from the controlling nature I developed in pursuit of perfection. I thought that if I do not control all aspects of my business or personal life, they would not be perfect. It had an adverse effect on people around me, as I know I hindered their growth.

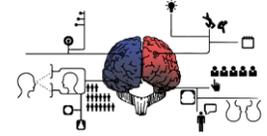
Expectations may or may not let us down, but ***expectations can never be constant***, and something that is not constant will never be a source of joy.

In pursuit of perfection, I honestly feel I set myself up for failures and disappointments.

The above is what I describe as a ***habit***, and it was never my characteristic trait when I was growing up. After many years I managed to let go of this habit. It is not impossible to let go of habits, and I know it's difficult, but it can be achieved.

Every individual is unique and has their own distinctive traits. We all have our strengths and weaknesses. I was fortunate enough to understand that it is impossible to change my temper. ***My temper is, and always will be, my characteristic weakness.*** I accept that it is my weakness but to exhaust all my energy in trying to change my personality trait which goes against my character is an impossible task.

At an early age, I identified my strengths, and I realised that they outweigh my weaknesses. I understood the importance of working on my strengths and this understanding played a part in my success, but ***I do not claim to be successful.*** It helped me pursue my passion for teaching, educating, inspiring, and growing people in sales as well as developing communication skills. This has always been my source of enjoyment. I refuse to be defined by my



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weaknesses. ***Yes, I must work on them, but what defines me are both my strengths and weaknesses.***

I honestly believe it is nearly impossible to change your own character, as I have not witnessed anyone succeed in being able to change their true self (*note: it is my belief*). Everyone has strengths and weaknesses, and our first step is to identify our strengths and build up our strengths.

This will help us to manage our weaknesses. This plays an integral part in the development of ***self-confidence***, and self-confidence is vital in sales as well as in our personal life.

Trying to eliminate your weaknesses can consume you and lead to ***self-doubt***. Self-doubt is a stumbling block in achieving success in a sales environment and in our personal growth.

Note to all readers: *A lot of us confuse self-confidence with arrogance. Self-confidence allows you to be humble when you are selling, and it is the first step in building trust with the customers. Arrogance does not lead to establishing trust with customers.*

3. A list of my skill set, and track record (duties and responsibilities at previous positions held, preferably chronologically)

I have always been **persistent** and **stubborn**; these traits are second nature. My decision to travel and study in **Dublin** materialised because of these traits. If I wasn't stubborn and had listened to my dad, I would be stuck in a profession with no passion. As a doctor, my dad wanted me to pursue a career in the medical field. This is not meant as disrespect to my dad because I realised that without higher education, the opportunities to succeed in India are limited when you have a population of more than a billion people.

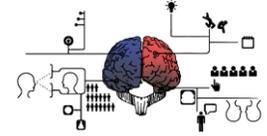
Some of you may relate to how overwhelming it is to grow up in a culture where your profession and education are the only criteria of how society judges you. Because my dad was a doctor and my decision to travel broke the norm, it was not an easy one to make.

This experience taught me that sometimes your characteristic weakness can also be your strength.

Being stubborn, choosing my own path, and being true to myself made it possible for me to succeed in my profession. These also helped me find my passion. This journey formed my belief in finding the right balance between my weaknesses and strengths, as sometimes going against your own character can be detrimental in the long run. My advice to anyone who wants to pursue a career in sales is this: do it with passion and your career is not a means to an end. ***It is essential to be yourself and listen to your gut!***

Even when I was studying, **I was money-driven. I started working for a company called Cobra which was a direct sales company, and our division in Dublin sold charity contracts on behalf of Oxfam, targeting the residential market.** In 2000 at the age of 19, I started selling door-to-door but never saw sales as a job. The experience of being able to connect with people became my passion, and that experience is the ***“why”*** in my professional life.

In a very short time, I developed a passion and love for this experience as it made me interact with all sections of society. ***Because I was selling a belief*** it made me realise the most important fact of sales:



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“Sales is not based on the products or prices; it is based on emotions

Game changer – Universal Group England

Certain moments in life alter your outlook. They prepare you for the journey that lies ahead and how to deal with the highs and lows, the good and the bad, sadness and happiness, and all the positives and negatives life has to offer. I do not refer to working for Universal Group as work; it was an education about life.

This may sound like a very bold statement, but the experience and knowledge I gained during this phase of my life, prepared me for anything.

First First Gig In Entrepreneurship

Even with all the knowledge I gained working for Universal Group, knocking residential doors; then ***starting a company in South Africa called Bsmart Communications, knocking business doors***; and the phenomenal success I experienced, but I have to be honest to anyone, ***I am still a human being with many flaws, and a human being who like anyone else has made many mistakes.***

So, for me, it is essential to draw attention to my **failures** because my self-realisation to change my mindset was a by-product of the failures.

Briefly, I will start by explaining how I started Bsmart Communications, and to this day many people do not believe how it all began. In 2006, I started working for Bsmart as a sales rep. My previous business partner, Erik, on my first day took me to see a client. Now, I have never sold a business telephone system in my life, and I was just an observer in that meeting. But what struck me most was that at the end of this meeting, Erik left his business card and said he would send a quote by the end of the business day.

I remember this moment like it was yesterday because I asked my boss, ***“why did we not attempt to sign the customer right there and then?”***

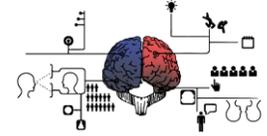
And his reply was,

“You cannot sign a Pabx right there and then, you have to send a quote.”

This statement was the starting point for me in South Africa because it made me realise that no one or no businesses sell Pabx by cold calling.

No one believed in a process where you can sign a customer during your first meeting. So, I went back to the office; I created my own paperwork, and I said to my boss, I am going to knock doors tomorrow. He was a bit taken aback, but he was supportive of my decision. So, the next day I went, and I knocked on my first door in Paarden Eiland in Cape Town. Within two hours I had knocked four doors, saw two owners, and signed both the owners. I was back in the office by 12 pm. It took everyone by surprise, and then I started the process of recruitment, and that’s how this chapter of my life began.

In a nutshell, from the first day of knocking doors in Paarden Eiland in October 2006 to February 2010, my boss who became my business partner and I had opened four offices. ***We had a staff complement of 150 people, and we sold***



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more than 10,000 NEC Pabx and more than 2000 Mitel Pbx.

To this day, I do not consider Bsmart a success story, because of one reason: “lack of human connection with our clients”.

We treated them as commodities and as numbers, and a business built on this belief will never survive the test of time. ***Hence, I had to close Bsmart because it was a show that had an ending.***

I must admit that the failure of this proportion taught me the most important lesson of how to get up and fight again after receiving the beating of your life. It also made me realise the importance of loyalty. Even after the closure of Bsmart, most of my employees stuck with me, because of their belief in me, **I was able to start IP Solutions SA.**

I take a lot of pride from the loyalty shown by my employees during those times.

"Henceforth, I am not even going to mention the financial loss due to the closure of Bsmart as I have learnt that a business just based on net profit is not a business, but an empty shell with no soul. That's what I've come to realise in life after the failure of Bsmart."

Persistence that led to the creation of IP solutions SA group Pty Ltd in 2010

To see if they fit together” was the belief and mission statement of IP Group. It originates from the failure of Bsmart as it made me understand the importance of providing a service and solution to the end user, based on their needs, instead of trying to sell them a product.

Even after I realised I had to change the way I sell; the question was how do I change my approach and what is the correct approach?

Then I had the privilege of learning from a course developed by **Ari Galper, “Unlock The Game”**, which formulated my beliefs in using trust-based language to create a true and genuine human connection. This belief was, and still is, one of the founding pillars of IP Group. The lesson any reader can take from this will play a significant role in your future growth: ***it's never too late to change a mindset or an approach that is not yielding the desired results.***

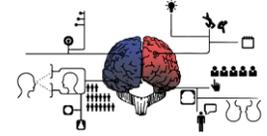
4. My why : Human Connexion The method to Madness 2019

The phenomenal growth of IP solutions SA forged a resolute belief in the unique sales process I created as it produced consistent, continued success.

That taught me a valuable lesson,
“people follow belief”

Any person who is still reading this experience by now should have realised that **‘madness’** has played a role in my journey. *And to be honest, madness has been a part of my personality since I can remember.*

My emphasis on this personality trait is not to inspire people towards this characteristic. Yes, it has helped me in



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my professional career, but it doesn't mean it has helped me in my personal life. **So, if someone had to ask me: have I achieved success? The answer without a doubt would be NO!**

However, I did not allow madness to subjugate my strengths, and I channeled this weakness in a way which allowed me to create **"SID", and this SID to someone is successful.**

But deep down I knew I had to transition from this being someone my family can relate to. *Only now, I can say I am on a path of intellectual growth in my professional life, but the journey doesn't end here.* When I can expand this growth in others only then I can consider myself to be successful.

My purpose in expressing my true self even though I am trying to educate people is because I have seen many people who are consumed by their insecurities. To a large extent, they expend all their energy on their weaknesses, and that manifests into the formation of a thought **"am I good enough?"**. I hope I can relate to my readers in a way where you can understand, I am not suggesting to ignore your weaknesses, but the lesson to be learnt is:

Do not let your weaknesses overpower your strengths. We all need to dedicate equal focus and energy to our strengths and weaknesses.

The above led me to writing my first book Human Connexion and following my purpose to train and educate people in sales as sales is a true reflection of life.

Once I understood my madness, I realised **madness was always a show**. It wasn't my strength; it was a way to hide my weakness regarding my temper. **Like all good shows, it has an ending.**

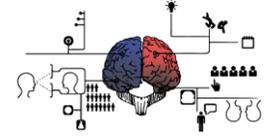
But there was always a method: the method will always survive the test of time, and the sales process is the method. So, even in madness, there should always be: "Method to Madness"

5. Does South Africa seem to be very vulnerable or at the brink of some exciting potential? Why do I believe this and how I can contribute to advancing the country.

Our Mad World Is New.. We Must Think Anew! And Act. 'We Must Disenthrall Ourselves' And Then We Can Save Humanity."

To answer your question, I believe it's a mad world and that is exciting in itself as the potential for human development is critical not only in South Africa but our species as a whole.

My beliefs around 'Management'. These beliefs came about through my lasting participation in the field of 'Management', and through this captivating experience I have been able to really construe the meaning of Management and truly appreciate its significance in the deposition of people and society in general. Hence it is appropriate to discuss Management in details before we continue our journey into people deposition



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I have always asked myself, how do I define Management, as Google Chrome plays an important part in my daily life (I might even go as far as saying in my hourly life) I typed these three words “Definition Of Management”. Below are the extracts from Wikipedia, after this profound reading experience , me and you both will suffer prolixity in the way Management has been defined by a multitude of people and various sources.

- **Classical Management Theory**

Evolution of Classical Management Theory during Industrial Revolution

Classical management theory is based on the belief that workers only have physical and economic needs. *It does not take into account social needs, job satisfaction, but instead advocates a specialization of labor, centralized leadership and decision-making, and profit maximization.* Designed solely to streamline operations, increase productivity and enhance the bottom line, this idea arose in the late 19th century and gained prominence through the first half of the 20th century.

The theory outlines an ideal workplace as one that rests on three main concepts:

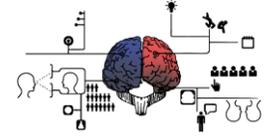
Hierarchical structure

Under classical management theory, workplaces are divided under three distinct layers of management. At the very top are the owners, board of directors and executives that set the long-range objectives for a firm. Middle management takes on the responsibility of overseeing supervisors while setting goals at the department level to fit within the confines of the managers’ budget. At the lowest level of the chain are supervisors, who manage day-to-day activities, address employee problems and provide training.

Specialization

The classical management theory involves an assembly line view of the workplace in which large tasks are broken down into smaller ones that are easy to accomplish. Workers understand their roles and typically specialize in a single area. This helps increase productivity and efficiency while eliminating the need for employees to multi-task.

Incentives



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This theory believes that employees are motivated by financial rewards. It proposes that employees will work harder and be more productive if they are awarded incentives based on their work. Employers who can motivate their employees using this tactic may be able to achieve increased production, efficiency and profit.

The autocratic leadership model is the central part of classical management theory.

In this system, there is no need to consult large groups of people for decisions to be made. A single leader makes a final decision and it is communicated downward for all to follow. This leadership approach can be beneficial when decisions need to be made quickly by one leader, rather than a group of company officials.

*“If we have to be honest to yourself most of us have experienced misanthropy of **‘Command - Control’**, and this ideology has pulverized the boundaries of our so called ideal workplace, this epidemic has managed to preside over common sense, altered our human behavior, has deep rooted our education system and even influenced our parenting manners.”*

My writing is based on real life experience and I have been on the receiving end of Command - Control Ideology, through the education system, through the established mindset of parenting in general, through my work experiences in Ireland and England and I have put to use the same ideology when I started my business. **I used to train my managers to apply this mindset of Command - Control as it yielded the desired results (Or so I thought at that time)**

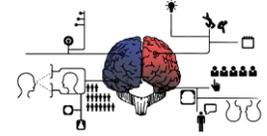
What excites me ? If I can teach enough leaders to practice

- **Humane Management Theory**

I don't know if this has been classified as a theory but for me, after years of being who I was, there are no other words that come to my mind other than being HUMANE. I have been lucky to experience cultures , different countries, and with my teachings hopefully it connects me and others on a human level. It has also set in motion **my Evolution From The above Mentioned Being To A Human Being.**

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- **What inspired me to write a Book and especially the title, Human ConneXion: Method to Madness? Who are you targeting and why should people read it?**

When I started writing this book, I wasn't sure how to describe myself. Do I emphasize my accomplishments? How much importance do I give to the failures I experienced along this journey? What role did my upbringing play in being the person I am today? Where do I begin to describe my mentors and the significant role they played in my professional growth? Do I even mention my academic accomplishments?



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*Then it dawned on me that none of that really matters. The purpose of this book is to share my experiences honestly, not to highlight my success or failures but to **connect** with you on a **human level**.*

The reason for a candid expression of my beliefs and experiences that led me to success and failures in professional and personal life.

I wrote this book to share my knowledge of sales. At the same time, I set out to help all, including myself, figure out how to deal with the daily pressure of our personal problems and find a way to balance both our professional and personal lives as well as how to enjoy life.

- **What do you think the training and development industry has lost sight of, why do I emphasize on human connection?**

We all have experienced working for companies that do not see the importance of training new sales employees. They would train every other division of the business, but when it comes to sales, it is a widely accepted norm that if you have experience in sales, you should be OK.

To make matters worse, they expect certain figures from a new salesperson who has not been educated on how to succeed. I find this practice unacceptable and stupid at every level, as the founding pillar of any company is its ability to sell.

I cannot stress how important it is to train a Pre - defined sales process, language, script, mannerism, and communication skills.

Consistent training on a regular basis which allows the growth of any company's biggest asset (People) can only lead to consistent results and that leads to Happiness.

- **What has been the highlight/s in my career thus far?**

All my failures, because from those failures my abaft journey in pursuit of humanity would have not been possible.

- **What do you think is currently vastly overrated and underrated?**

Digital transformation over human evolution as I believe we need to evolve so we can truly transform our broken society. Hence my belief in a human connection over a social connection through technology .