

What Others Are Saying About

Long Shots and Layups

Memories and Stories from the
Golden Era of the Utah Jazz



"*Long Shots and Layups* is a fun, insightful journey through Mike's career with the Jazz. He's a great friend, but an even better story teller."

Craig Bolerjack
Utah Jazz TV Play-by-Play Announcer

"I have so many fond memories of my playing days with the Jazz, and Mike does a great job of aptly describing the journey and exciting events that brought us all together, as the Jazz made their run to the NBA Finals. Enjoy!"

Thurl Bailey
Utah Jazz Forward, 1983-1991 & 1999

"Mike Snarr's inside view of the legendary Stockton-to-Malone era is not to be missed. Jazz fans will love this ride."

Lee Benson
Columnist, *Deseret News*

"The author articulates a backstage view of the Utah Jazz's golden years. Be prepared for a major wave of nostalgia and longing for a bygone era in sports history."

Val Christensen
Local entrepreneur, founder of Altius Health Plans
and InnerChange Behavioral Health Company

"I highly recommend this book to anyone who loves basketball, and particularly the Utah Jazz. Mike's impressive recall of the events that occurred during the team's historic run for an NBA championship makes this a great read."

Grant Harrison
Vice President, Utah Jazz Game Operations,
1979-2013

LONG SHOTS AND LAYUPS

Memories and Stories from the
Golden Era of the Utah Jazz

MICHAEL G. SNARR

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*To Elliott Mae Snarr,
our newly born, first grandchild.*

*She's a beautiful baby:
bright, inquisitive, lively.
And, she has long fingers.
I think she might be a baller.*

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foreword



Many fans probably don't realize how much goes into making an NBA Basketball Franchise successful. I worked in basketball operations, and I had the good fortune to work for one of the finest sports properties in the world. On the other side of the table, on the business side of things, so many people dedicated their careers to helping our team be successful off the court, too. I'm grateful to all of them for their tremendous support. Mike Snarr was one of those dedicated people, and over the years, we became friends. I appreciate him writing this book and telling you about so many things that happened along the way, during the time we both called the Jazz our home.

Jerry Sloan, September 2017
Head Coach
Utah Jazz, 1988–2011

author's note



When I first thought about writing this book, I wanted to chronicle my experiences as a salesman in the sponsorship sales department of the Utah Jazz, for my family. But then I thought it would be fun to write a brief history of the Jazz from my view of the team during the 1990s, when John Stockton, Karl Malone, Jeff Hornacek, and Jerry Sloan made their historic run for an NBA Championship, which was a time roughly parallel with my career in sales for the Jazz. (Yes, I rode their coattails for a long, long time.) I ended up writing about both stories in tandem, knowing just about any book editor would cringe at the idea. But—I figured—why not? So, this is a sports book with a business slant, or maybe it's a business book with a sports slant. I just hope that if you happen to come across it, you enjoy reading it for whatever purpose you choose.

introduction



I worked for the Utah Jazz in sponsorship sales for 28 years, and in the summer of 2015, I retired. The front office, led by Kevin O'Connor and now Dennis Lindsey, deftly stockpiling draft picks and using them wisely over the past several years, had put young players on the court who came in charging—seemingly out of nowhere—to have the third-best record in the NBA after the All-Star break of my last season. We had seven potential all-star players, all in their early twenties. Lindsey, the team general manager, jokingly said at one point that the starting five were barely old enough to have a drink in a bar. Our core players, Derrick Favors, Gordon Hayward, Rudy Gobert, Alec Burks, Rodney Hood, Trey Burke, and Dante Exum (just 19 years old at the time), were developing chemistry and getting an education about how to play the game from their energetic, bright, and very focused rookie NBA Head Coach Quin Snyder, who, as much as any player on the team, was filled with resolve to succeed.

And, under the seven-foot-nine-inch wingspan of Mr. Gobert, the team had gone from twenty-eighth in the league in defense to the third best by the end of the 2015 season. By 2016, Utah would be the best defensive team in the league. Things had not looked brighter since Karl Malone, John Stockton, Mark Eaton, and Jeff Hornacek had teamed up with Coach Jerry Sloan in the mid-1990s. I was there for the first run at a championship, and I still had row eleven seats to watch the new team start another run. For the first time in over a dozen years, fans were hastening to buy season tickets, the press was optimistic, and our owners, the Miller family, had to be thinking that there was a chance to go deep into the playoffs, if not immediately, at least in the next several years. That was my “take,” too.

All four of my children, who are avid Jazz fans themselves, told me I was crazy to hang it up. My neighbors seemed surprised too. One of my very closest friends took the time to write the following bogus news story months before I announced I was leaving the organization:

Man's Mental State in Doubt AP—Salt Lake City, Utah—
In the midst of the worst economic recession in American history, when jobs are coveted and guarded like gold, a Holladay man at the peak of his career but too young to retire has stunned friends, family, and anyone who has heard about it by quitting his well-paying job with no other prospects in the works. Utah Jazz officials announced today that Mike Snarr has resigned as Sr. Vice President for the Jazz. In doing so, he is not only giving up a very nice salary, but also many free perks, including trips throughout the world, season Jazz tickets, including dinner, college scholarship opportunities—for family members—road trips to Jazz games on the team charter plane, and investment opportunities that have proven to be lucrative (although he has not saved enough of it to justify this decision), and other perks too numerous to mention. Neighbors were not surprised to see his wife packing her Lexus (obtained at a discount because of her husband's job) with all her belongings. Her whereabouts are unknown. Calls to Mr. Snarr were not returned. Authorities do not think drugs or alcohol were involved in the decision.

I had to laugh out loud. The good thing is that the part about my wife leaving me hasn't happened. I'm hopeful that she'll stick around. But I had to ask myself, was I really crazy? No, not crazy. Just a little tired. During my 28 years with the team, I'd watched a couple of Jazz players stay one or two years too long, and I didn't want to emulate them. I was certainly old enough, and I felt like I'd been a factor in helping guide our sales teams during some of our best years. In addition, I'd helped put naming rights deals together for the Jazz arena, the team practice facility, and our AAA baseball team's stadium, along with pourage rights agreements for Coca Cola and Anheuser-Busch, a deal with Delta Air Lines, making them our "official airline," and had personally managed somewhere in the vicinity of \$140 million in sales revenue over the course of my career. I felt like the timing was pretty good. Besides, phrases like ROI (return on investment) and CRM (customer relations management) were beginning to creep into our sales vocabulary. I was always very high on both concepts, but technology

was changing the way we addressed them. It was going to be a new day, as if some upstart NBA executive had decided to move the three-point line back another ten feet. It would be a slightly different game, and I wasn't very high-tech. But 28 years ago, in the fall of 1986, I was a rookie with the Utah Jazz (and so was Dell Curry, by the way, in a different department). Frank Layden was the coach, Ricky Green was the starting point guard, John Stockton was in his third season, and Karl Malone was in his second. Dave Checketts was the team president. I didn't realize I would soon have an opportunity to make a contribution to the franchise by helping build an all-star lineup of bright, funny, talented, savvy salespeople who, in mirror-like fashion to the players on the court, came from different backgrounds but would evolve into one of the finest sponsorship sales lineups in professional basketball.

When I was hired, I told my pregnant wife that I would do this for six months and then find a real job. After all, a real job wouldn't be with an NBA basketball team comprised of, as Frank Layden once said, 'twelve young millionaires.'

I had no idea that the next 28 years would become what they did: challenging, draining, adrenaline-filled, but ultimately, extremely rewarding. For that reason, I'm grateful to the late Larry Miller, team owner, his wife, Gail, and all the Miller family for giving a rookie salesman a spot on the front office bench and then letting him play out his career with the Jazz. This is a business story, but it's also a whole bunch of other stories that, in total, make up the incredible saga of a small-town team in a big city, professional basketball world. As is often said around the office as well as around town: "Go Jazz." The owners, the front office, the players, and millions of supportive fans have embraced this team and helped create one of the finest sports cultures in any town in any sport. Very few of us really thought we'd still be chanting "Go Jazz" nearly 40 years later.

beginnings



I became interested in the game of basketball at an early age, probably around six years old. I remember asking my father to help me learn how to “dribble” a basketball. Since we didn’t have one at the time, he was able to find a half-inflated, smaller-sized beach ball, and he began to tutor me. With a little practice, I became amazed that the round, off-balanced, wobbly sphere could actually bounce up into the palm of my hand every once in a while.

At about the age of eight, we moved to a new neighborhood and built a “state-of-the-art,” sixties-style, brick rambler with a slanted driveway. By then, I was completely hooked on basketball, and I was able to convince my parents to permanently weld (yes, weld) a basketball hoop to the flat roof over the garage. My (yes, my) driveway had a slight rolling ledge just right of the hoop that separated the garage and the carport. It didn’t matter that the chalked-in foul line (we eventually had a professional painter finish what I had started) was about 10 and a half or maybe even 11 feet below the rim thanks to the inconsiderate guy who had poured the sloping cement and the rolling ledge. Turning an ankle was an easy thing to do. But none of that mattered. As soon as it was around 50 degrees, or even 40, and the driveway could be shoveled, I was clearing the snow so I could start shooting inflatable, rock-solid, rubber basketballs (I had graduated from beach balls by then) at that orange rim and silky white net. The net was really key to all of this. Of course, there’s nothing like listening to the ball “swish” through the net. Without a net, the ball hit the garage door when it went through the rim—or didn’t. Even though I missed hearing the ball “tickle the twine,” I didn’t mind because it often came right back to me. My mother said it sounded like I was kicking the garage door (wouldn’t think of it), so she kept me well-stocked with nylon nets. I was in business. Homework could wait until I couldn’t see my hand in front of my face. My attendance was good that year and beyond. I

even went to school when I was sick. Otherwise, my parents wouldn't let me get that all-weather, rubber basketball out of the closet to shoot on my makeshift court.



In the summer of 1979, the New Orleans Jazz came to Utah. Through a business association, I was invited to attend a welcome luncheon for the Jazz, hosted by the Salt Lake Chamber and held in a rather small banquet room at the then Tri Arc Hilton Hotel just off the main downtown freeway exit in Salt Lake City. I don't remember any players attending the event, but Frank Layden was introduced as the team's general manager. He hugged the podium like a mid-sized brown bear might and leaned into the microphone in a somewhat self-deprecating way. I don't remember the first thing he said, but I'm pretty sure it was funny. As a speaker, he was engaging, knowledgeable, and refreshingly hilarious. He'd been hired by New Orleans in May, and shortly after, the team got the nod from the NBA that they could move the franchise to Utah. Frank and his wife, Barbara, had been to Utah for the 1979 NCAA Finals at the University of Utah in March—the one featuring Larry Bird vs. Magic Johnson. As they were boarding a plane to return to New York, Frank turned to Barbara and said, "Take one last look at these beautiful mountains. You'll never see them again."

Commissioner David Stern was not in favor of the move, however, and often warned the city via the press that the Jazz would not likely survive in Utah. From his view, and many others, statistics should have proved him out. How could a small state hovering around two million people support the Jazz and four major college sports programs operating within one hundred miles of downtown Salt Lake? What the experts had overlooked was the tremendous emotional commitment Utah sports fans were about to invest in a last place NBA team. It took several years before Stern and other critics realized that the Jazz was there to stay, something we at the Jazz, the Miller family, and the community at large held onto with at least a modicum of satisfaction.

That year, the leading scorer was Adrian Dantley with 28 points per game, who was acquired just before the season started from the

Lakers. Legendary Pete Maravich, with the floppy hair and equally floppy socks, averaged 17.1 points per game, but he only played in 17 games. Injuries were quickly taking a toll on the uncanny, brilliant all-star and future hall of famer. Alan Bristow and Ben Poquette were the only Jazzmen to play in all 82 games. Tom Nissalke became the head coach. Former CBS TV color commentator for nationally televised NBA games, Hot Rod Hundley, who probably moved to Salt Lake City somewhat reluctantly, anchored the TV and radio simulcasts. He quickly came to love the city and the fans who warmly embraced the "voice" of the Utah Jazz.



I was married on September 5, 1979, to a beautiful young woman just about eight days before the Jazz would acquire Dantley. I worked in an advertising agency for a young man named Bob Fotheringham. I wanted to work for Bob the day I watched a TV spot for a local auto dealership that featured a used car and a live chicken, for which Bob served as an on-camera talent dressed as a mustached professor or maybe a mad scientist. I was the marketing director for a local TV station, but I pleaded with him for months before he let me join his fledgling four-person advertising agency. I loved working for Bob, but he didn't love me, at least not right away. I was a slow learner, and Bob needed immediate help getting that chicken off the ground. But sooner or later, we began to build the agency with new clients under Bob's leadership. I remember the first new client I landed: Precision Bilt Homes in Ogden, Utah. It was a very happy day.

The ad agency business is a capricious, crazy one. The thing I liked the least was that almost every client considered themselves an advertising and marketing expert. We often ended up using someone's daughter, cousin, or aunt in our campaigns. Sometimes, seemingly sound or even great ideas were tossed aside for hard-sell tactics, and worst of all, we all waited for the call from a prized client who might say something like "My brother-in-law is going into the ad agency business, and I've decided to let him run my advertising program." It didn't matter if sales were up, if we had won a nationally acclaimed "Clio Award"

for great advertising on their behalf, if they may have captured top-of-mind awareness away from their competitors, or that some of our staff had sometimes stayed up overnight to meet imposed deadlines. It didn't matter that, because of lost revenue to the agency, we had to fire several people who worked diligently on the account. In that regard, it could be a rather cruel business.

Nevertheless, I loved the agency business. I loved the creativity it demanded and the constant search for besting your last effort. I had never heard the term "cutting edge" when I started in the business, but there is no other phrase that better reflects what the agency business is really all about. It was stimulating, and we had lots of fun. I learned, grew, and thrived on being at work each day. For many of us, the blood was pumping as soon as we walked in the door. I think it is where I learned to work, if for no other reason than the fact that virtually every minute at work was on a client's time. Billable hours were important. Productive billable hours or the number of hours you could actually charge a client were critical, and that kept us focused on the tasks at hand every day.

Of course, we were always scratching the market for new business. With several new acquisitions and some client success in a relatively short time, Fotheringham & Associates' reputation in the marketplace grew, and we became a "player," along with several other key agencies. We were also able to add more talented people, including Denny Powers, acquired from J Walter Thompson in Chicago. He reported to Bruce Jensen, who became a great friend, along with Bob Fotheringham and others. Bruce headed up our creative department, and I headed up marketing and media. Bob, Bruce, and I met once a week to discuss our business and financial condition. Bob and Bruce both became Ad Federation (a local advertising club) recipients of the annual award for people who impact the marketplace in a significant way each year. It was a very prestigious award of which they were both deserving. I was honored to know and work with these two great individuals.

Denny was primarily an artist, but he also had a good feel for how to market a company's products. He and Bruce made a formidable creative team. Bob and I managed the new business side of things. Together, we found businesses who needed advertising and marketing

help, and with Bruce and Denny heading up the development of sound and creative strategies, we brought new clients into the fold. One of my strengths (at least that's what I've been told) was making presentations, but one of my weaknesses was preparing presentations, especially when they stretched late into the evening hours. More often than not, I was dismissed by my colleagues around 10 p.m. while they put finishing touches on things, which sometimes took them into the early hours of the next day. I'm still indebted to them for that, but I think they knew I would be useless the next day if I stayed past my prime awake time.

It was Denny who taught me how to make presentations. Rather than a formal, stiff, and serious kind of presentation, he advocated a relaxed, casual, and engaging approach, which was more my style. So, I rather enjoyed making the pitch to prospective clients. That learning experience helped me immensely in the Jazz world, where we made multi-million dollar/multi-year presentations to key clients for such things as the arena naming rights, beverage pourage agreements, and other key Jazz assets.

We had lots of fun making presentations at Fotheringham & Associates, and we won our fair share. But there was always pressure knowing that other top agencies would be pulling out all the creative stops necessary to try to win a prized account. Sometimes, we were able to develop the kind of relationship with a prospect that just naturally spring-boarded into a deal. That made life easier—much easier. More likely, we would be in a very competitive joust with other hungry agencies. One of the clients we coveted was a major financial institution, and they were actively shopping the marketplace for a good fit. It was one of those presentations where my compatriots sent me home early to be rested for the next day. Bruce and Denny had disappeared to a secluded hotel room for two days, barricading themselves while they worked feverishly to come up with a positioning statement on which we could hang all our attendant marketing strategies. The powerful, succinct statement was "Client name: Your partners in money management." I thought it was brilliant, and we were excited to present it to them.

Occasionally, there was a sort of "tipping point" in a presentation when you could either gain ground and potentially win the account, or contrarily, put yourself in a position to lose the business. One of those

occurred in this presentation. The new owners of the financial institution were from the eastern United States. We weren't. So, during the presentation, I watched their lead guy, a seemingly tough-minded New York businessman, for some sort of indication about how he was receiving our ideas. At one point, he interrupted us and said something like "Why is it that Utah seems so isolated, that it just doesn't keep up with the trends of the rest of the United States?"

A very difficult question. Without thinking too much, I responded with, "We think it's the mountains." It turned out to be a good answer. Rather than apologizing for our culture, I had good-naturedly embraced it.

Of course, the city is surrounded by mountains. They are the first thing you notice as your flight makes a final approach onto the dry, desert floor of Salt Lake City. My response generated immediate chuckles and opened the door for us to address the real issues of how we could effectively position their business in the marketplace. We won the account. It was a very good day. And yes, they loved Bruce and Denny's slogan. That was the real difference maker.

One of the real challenges of agency work is juggling accounts. We had just acquired this new, very big account that could potentially generate substantial revenue for us. We weren't yet fully staffed to handle the increased workload, and as we hurriedly perused the market for talent, we were working overtime to meet the needs of this new account as well as many others in our fold. One of our earliest meetings with our new client was to introduce our account team to their marketing team. It was an important meeting with about eight to ten people in attendance. I was to head it up. Just as I prepared to leave my office to meet them at theirs, I received a distress call from another client. We had a rather big problem, and I needed to hold hands with that client for a few minutes. I was late for the meeting, probably 20 minutes late. As I approached the door, I could hear them all talking.

I didn't know how to apologize for my late entry, so on a whim, I opened the door to their board room, stuck my head in, and simply said, "Amnesia."

Luckily, I caught them off guard, so they laughed, and all was forgiven. My other option was to make a simple apology, but I wondered

how to do that without begging them to question why such a critical first meeting had placed second. After the laughter subsided, we dove into the tasks at hand. The good thing was that we had prepared diligently for the meeting, and we were able to show them we were serious about their business.



Meanwhile, the Jazz would begin to establish a toe hold and a fan base in SLC over the next several years. Attendance was sketchy at first, around 6 to 7,000 fans per game. Frank Layden humorously claimed that when someone called the office to see what time the game started, he would counter by simply asking, "What time can you be here?"

Inside the Jazz organization, Layden and owner Sam Battistone were trying to rebuild the team. In their inaugural year, the team gave up its draft rights in the first three rounds, taking Greg Deane of the University of Utah at the sixty-seventh pick in the fourth round. The following year, they drafted Darrel Griffith with the second pick and had their first sellout in the Salt Palace of 12,015 in March of 1980. Dantley ended up winning the NBA scoring title, but the Jazz could only win 28 games. The next three years were relatively uneventful. Tragically, Terry Furlow, a guard for the Jazz, died in an automobile accident during the off-season near his home in Cleveland. The following season, promising forward Bill Robinzine passed away.

In February of 1982, Sam Battistone became the sole owner of the team by buying out co-owner Larry Hatfield. That summer, the team selected Dominique Wilkins with the third pick in the draft, but to save money and stay afloat, sent him to Atlanta for John Drew, Freeman Williams, and cash, reliably, about \$1 million, which may have saved the franchise.



I never worried about Bob's advertising agency staying in business. However, keeping the doors open can be a dangerous proposition, especially for a new start-up agency. Agencies typically front media bills

and other expenses while waiting to be reimbursed by the client. In addition, almost every agency does work for a company or two that eventually goes out of business, thus never paying for agency services. If collections get behind at all, it's easy to be left holding a handful of unpaid expenses incurred by a failing client. But Fotheringham & Associates survived and kept growing and won awards and earned the respect of the market. Unfortunately, I left before we peaked, but I watched our successes continue to mount. I still consider my colleagues from those days to be close friends. Occasional lunch and get-togethers help me keep track of their wonderful careers and success stories. During my stint at the agency, I fondly remember many wonderful company retreats, parties, and social gatherings away from the office.

At one point, Bob negotiated memberships for us at a downtown sports facility where we played basketball every Tuesday morning at 6 a.m. Some of our agency people had athletic ability. Some didn't. I remember catching an errant elbow from one of our especially long-armed artists and leaving for stitches during one early morning soiree. One of our staffers was Jeff Jonas, the All-American, University of Utah point guard, and I occasionally ended up guarding him, and vice versa. By the time we finished, showered, and dragged ourselves to the office, it was 9 a.m. It felt like 4 p.m.

I had resorted to tending to my wounds in my office from time to time, and one day, as I sat behind my desk with my trousers lowered to apply a new drug called DMSO to my aching knees, one of our assistants walked in. I had forgotten to lock the door. Of course, I was hidden from the waist down, but she could tell something was not quite right as I hurriedly and as pleasantly as possible dismissed her. The situation was complicated by the fact that DMSO has a very distinct smell, and I was worried she might "sense" that something else was wrong. I confessed the story to someone, and word quickly spread around the office. Unfortunately, when I later left the agency, the story lingered, but hopefully not the DMSO odor.

All in all, we were a very tight, harmonious group. I didn't have an opportunity to help recreate that feeling of oneness until I took the reins of the Triad Marketing Department and then the Jazz Sponsorship Sales Department some years later. Those are my favorite memo-

ries, my favorite times, and the experiences that have meant the most to me in my career. Winning clients, snagging major sponsors, or putting together a naming rights deal are exceptional experiences, but it's the fight, the strategy, the coming together in a relatively small group to make something memorable happen, to feel like part of a team with a singular mission—those are the moments I will always remember.

My favorite client experience at Fotheringham & Associates involved winning the account of a new bank in town. This was early on in the agency's history, and we felt some pressure to win them over. Creative Director Rick Stockton would sit quietly in his office for days when we picked up a new account. We were depending on him and Art Director Ricki Gardner to help us position the bank among its competitors, mostly well-established financial institutions with many years of experience. What could we say that would help them find a niche in the industry? Rick came up with the perfect slogan: "At Client Bank, we'll treat you like a million bucks." We worked closely with the board and the new bank president, a guy named Jim Hill. When the grand opening was complete, and after we launched the media and public relations campaign, I remember sitting in one of the bank VP's offices while I waited to see Jim. The young VP eased back in his office chair and said something I still remember: "Well, you and I have worked hard to get to this point, and I think we should sit back and relax. We've paid our dues. We should enjoy this ride." I didn't think much about it then, but later, as I reflected on his comments, I realized they did not resonate with me. I didn't subscribe to the philosophy of paying one's dues so you could kick back. Six months later, he was gone from the bank. I wasn't surprised.



Meanwhile, the Jazz wasn't making great progress as a team, at least not based on their win-loss record. They compiled only 30 wins in 1983 and failed to qualify for the playoffs. But Dantley, Darrell Griffith, Ricky Green, and John Drew gave us all some hope. Unfortunately, Dantley missed the last 60 games of the season but managed to score 57 points against Chicago on December 4, just prior to tearing

a ligament in his right wrist less than two weeks later, which ended his season. There was Mark Eaton, too, getting more playing time and starting to become the center everyone would soon talk about. Supposedly, the great Julius Erving once said that it didn't matter what you could do with a basketball if you still had to face Mark Eaton once you got in the paint (the area beneath the basket).



In 1983, seven years after joining Fotheringham & Associates, out of nowhere, I received a call from Manny Floor, a family friend and senior fraternity brother at the University of Utah, who was then the president of a new expanding real estate project that would dominate the city. At least, that was the idea. It was called Triad America, financed by a billionaire Saudi named Adnan Khashoggi. Manny's offer was too good to turn down. I accepted. The following weekend, he called me at home and informed me that he was increasing my salary by another five thousand dollars. He had won me over, and I was getting a little tired of the long hours I was putting in at the agency.

I remember telling Bob Fotheringham about the time I had recently driven to work late, around 9:00 a.m. instead of 7:00 or 7:30 a.m. Next to me on the road was a guy about my age, driving a very expensive car. He was barely driving the speed limit, and he appeared to be day dreaming while he sipped from what looked like a cup of coffee. I noticed him as I frantically steered around his and other cars to make up for lost time, knowing that a full load of work awaited me at the office. "What does that guy do?" I'd wondered. "I want his job." Maybe my new job would be just as exciting and less demanding. I would soon learn otherwise.



It's surprising how a small alteration, a relatively minor adjustment, can ripple into something much different, substantially altering a company's performance or a team's win-loss record. In the 1982-83 season, the Jazz won 32 games, didn't make the playoffs, and muddled

along in mediocrity. But one year later, they captured the Midwestern Division title by winning 45 games and drilling into the second round of the playoffs. You could argue that not much had changed, but the team had one more year together, and the experience helped them win more games. As a team, the Jazz blocked a few more shots and got a few more rebounds, but it was not a significant enough difference to propel them to win 13 more games. The difference was offense. Instead of being outscored by opponents by an average of three or more points per game in 1983, the Jazz was averaging almost three more points per game than their foes. It was a near five-point swing for the good. There was one reason for the difference, and that reason, as you will soon learn, was John Drew.



It was about this time when I started to think more about how one really does make a difference in his or her own life, in the lives of others and in business. I hoped that I had made a difference at Fotheringham & Associates. Bob had invested in me, and over time, I grasped the importance of being effective instead of just getting by. When I left Fotheringham & Associates, I felt the exhilaration that comes from being fully engaged in the tasks in front of me. I relished the chance to woo new clients, collectively create a winning campaign that actually helped them succeed, and cement relationships that endured. I was having fun. And we were winning. Winning makes a difference. Such a difference. So when the opportunity to jump to a new company did come along, I was reticent to leave. I loved the crazy ad business despite all the drawbacks. I loved the people around me, both inside and outside the company. But the chance to earn more money and have a big say in the marketing direction of this new and exciting venture spoke to me.



What John Drew could do for the Jazz was get buckets. He could shoot the ball as well as anyone who ever let a leather game ball fly from his fingertips. In his first full season with the Jazz in 1984, he averaged nearly 18 points per game in just 20 minutes. He outscored the team's

best player, Adrian Dantley, who was named the league's most improved player with 1.26 points per minute to 1.23 points per minute. Dantley was the most efficient of the two players, shooting a remarkable 58% from the field to Drew's 48%, albeit most of Dantley's points came from within 10 feet of the basket compared to 17 to 18 feet for Drew. Together, and alongside Darrel Griffith, they were as potent a scoring threat as any team in the NBA. It was short-lived, however. Drew would only play in 19 games in the 1984–85 season. Had he not got tangled up in the high life, succumbing to drugs, he could have been a factor for the Jazz and in the league for many years to come. His fall is evident in how the Jazz did the following year, finishing fourth in the Midwest with a 41–41 record. In that year, they allowed as many points as they scored, 109 per game instead of the 115:113-point ratio per game the previous year. Scoring five fewer points per game cost them the division title, leading to their fourth-place finish. It didn't seem like much of a step backwards, but in the NBA, it was a lot. John Drew helped propel them from a 32-win team to a 45-win team in one season. Unfortunately, his remarkable upside had a costly downside for the team, especially for himself. He was a good man, a nice guy, and a very talented athlete who got lost in what looked like the good life.



At one point in my career, I thought about re-entering the crazy, demanding ad agency business. I talked to a veteran ad guy who couldn't understand why I might consider doing something he thought was beneath the glory and glamour of ad agency stardom. He was a rock star in the business. I asked him, in a quiet one-on-one moment, what made it so special. Like me, he loved developing a strategy to make a client successful. There was glory in that, but it came with a price. I could tell he was burning out and was probably prone to drinking too much as he crossed over the apex of his career. He said the only way he kept going was by taking as many three-day weekends as he could. At that moment, as I looked at him, I wondered how many more Fridays or Mondays he could take off without losing his edge. It happened to John Drew too quickly. My friend lasted longer, but I feared the end

result could very easily be the same. Despite the potential for burnout, which maligns the ad business as much as anything, managing stress so that it doesn't eat you up is important in any endeavor. I was interested in having a long career in the ad world, and I loved my "associate" friends at Fotheringham & Associates enough to think I would never leave or never want to leave, or more importantly, never *need* to leave because "the good life" got the best of me. I had no idea that my next stop would be just as potentially derailing as anything I'd ever done.



It's funny that I never burned out in basketball but worried about overloading at work—funny how that works—even when the kid in my neighborhood pulled me aside and told me to give up the sport because I was no good after I played in a game on his backyard court (it actually had lights, a full-sized, half-cement court, and a very nice fiberglass-type backboard, which was the first I had ever seen in an outdoor setting). He told me I was too short, too skinny, too slow, and couldn't shoot. I was about 10 years old, and yes, all of the above was accurate. The truth hurt. I went home crying but vowed I would prove him wrong. I never got the chance. He moved a couple of years later, and I never saw him again, but I still sneaked into that backyard with the glass hoop and shot around once in a while when no one was looking. I can't even remember his name, but he had inspired me. I would love to have met him on a court about 10 years later. By then, I was fully seasoned and already had two knee operations under my belt.

chapter one takeaways



A leader in a sales seminar I once attended introduced me to the term “takeaways,” describing them as little epiphany-type messages that stick with us, touch us, or perhaps inspire us to do things differently and better. A “takeaway” might be something someone said or an occurrence. In a three-day seminar, you might only experience a few of them, but any one might potentially be career altering. Over the years, I’ve kept track of these so-called takeaways (and not just from seminars). I’m sure you have too. At the close of each chapter, I’ll mention a few things that have stuck with me over the years and have helped me along the way.

1. Think of your day in terms of “billable hours.” Keep a log of how you spend your time. That way, you’ll know just what you accomplished and how you might better use your time tomorrow.
2. Pay your dues. The guy at the bank who we helped launch out of obscurity didn’t last because he thought you only paid your dues once. Get up every day with a purpose, and then turn purpose into action.
3. Be creative. Think outside the box a little bit and be willing to improvise when your back is against the wall. Even resort to having “amnesia” if it helps you accomplish your goals or when “sorry” might not be good enough. Being creative “in the moment” is how we solve life’s little problems.
4. Be your natural self. I learned when making presentations that it is much easier to engage and win over the audience if you can be at ease in front of them. If you can relax in front of others, you’re telling them that everything is okay, so the chances are better that they will “buy in” to what you have to say.
5. Learn from every experience. Create your own “takeaway” list each day. See how well or how poorly you handled things.
6. Think about how you might make a difference in life. Determine what you can do to elevate yourself, your family, your business, your career, and your life in a way that will give it distinction.

7. Don't lose sight of your objectives. Maybe that's easier to do if you play professional basketball or become a rock star. If success comes too easily, which wasn't the case for me, please step back a little and talk to someone who has been down that road before. If you "play your cards right," it will be a long road with a nice payday at the end of it.
8. My all-time favorite "takeaway" from a sales seminar I attended was this: "Never forget to ask a prospective client what is important to them." That little phrase, when asked earnestly, never failed me.