

# Randy Clay

## Biography

Randy Clay is the founder and CEO of US Safety Sign and Decal a company that he started in 1983 at the age of 22 in a spare bedroom of a mobile home. Today his 8000 sq ft facility manufactures safety signs, decals, and stickers for the oil and gas industries.

He reveals the secrets to his success with his inspiring new book, *SuperQuickLessons: 5 Proven Skills of Business Success*, published in January, 2006.

As a highly motivated public speaker, his keynote topics include the following:

- **The Great Life**
- **10 Signs Of A Super Salesperson**
- **10 Commandments of Customer Service**
- **Momma Said! (10 Things Momma Knew That Can Get You That Next Job!)**

The Tulsa Metro Chamber of Commerce labeled Clay as a “networking guru.” His writing and public speaking often communicate a positive attitude and reveal how each of us can reach our personal potential. Clay’s public speaking clients consist of universities, business organizations, trade associations, chambers of commerce, and small businesses include:

MotoPhoto	Oklahoma Safety Council
United States Postal Service	Conoco/Phillips Petroleum
Entrepreneurs of Tulsa	Small Business University
Frontier Hotels	South Grand Lake Chamber
Home Builders Association	Tulsa Advertising Federation
Northeastern State University	Women’s Council of Realtors
Tulsa Housing Authority	University of Tulsa
National Assoc of Women Business Owners	Tulsa Metro Chamber
Oral Roberts University Management Society	

Clay resides with his wife, Melanie, and their two children, Joshua and Caleb, in Sand Springs, a suburb of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

For more information, please consult: [www.superquicklessons.com](http://www.superquicklessons.com)

“Randy Clay has gone from a “one-man show” to successful, business owner for one simple reason – he had the sense to look for sound business advice and then follow it. If you are running a business, take a big bite out of this book!” --

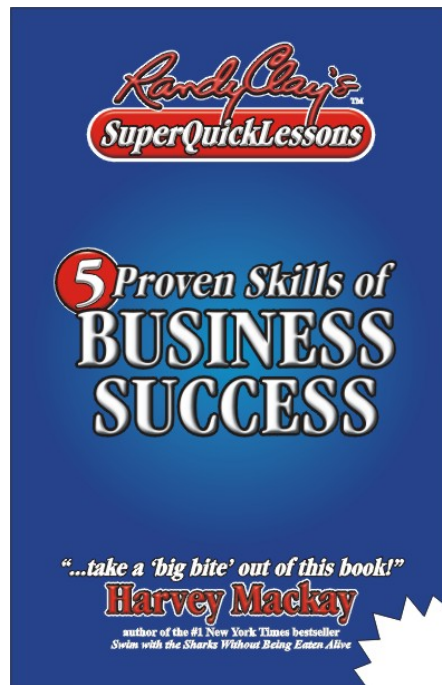
**Harvey Mackay**

**Author of #1 New York Times Bestseller,  
*Swim With the Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive***

“Randy truly knows that the ability to sell is the #1 skill in both business and life; therefore, the lessons in his book are important to learn so you can profit and build successful teams.”

**Blair Singer**

Rich Dad’s Advisor and Author of New York Times bestsellers,  
*Sales Dogs & The ABC’s of Building a Business Team that Win*



**America is home to 28 million small business owners – and over 60% - or 18 million – are sole proprietors. How do these entrepreneurs, risk-takers, and innovators pursue sales, network, and manage their people effectively?**

Randy Clay is the founder and CEO of US Safety Sign and Decal a company that he started 22 years ago at the age of 22 in a spare bedroom of a mobile home. Today his 8000 sq ft facility manufactures signs, decals, and stickers for the oil and gas industry. He credits a lot of his mentoring and guidance to Harvey Mackay, a multi-bestselling business book author, best known for *Swim With The Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive*.

The product of his experiences and lessons learned can be found in Clay's new book, *SuperQuickLessons: 5 Proven Skills of Business Success*.

Clay's SuperQuick-read offers a great collection of personal stories about how he applied what he learned from Mackay and other business authors over the past decade. His key message is about how people are capable of reaching their potential and beyond.

"Everyone is capable of achieving success, but they need to be prepared to follow sound business advice, make mistakes, take risks, and pursue knowledge relentlessly," says Clay.

His advice on how to grow your business comes from the heartland of Middle America. Clay shares these lessons in his new book:

- **How to build your network ("Is your "net" working?)**
- **The steps to being a great salesperson ("It's all about them")**
- **Ways to manage people effectively, fairly, and productively.**
- **How to adopt the mindset of a successful "customer servant".**
- **Ways to market your company ("Outrageous is contagious")**

Clay, who writes a weekly column for the Tulsa Business Journal, often speaks of honesty in business, motivating your workforce, a strong work ethic, and selling in a style more akin to socializing. He says: "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care!"

Clay has learned how to start with nothing and work his way up. With no money to pay for college and his mother battling a malignant brain tumor he dropped out of college after one semester. He apprenticed for a commercial screen-printing firm for a year and then took a management position at a sporting goods printer. A year-and-a-half later, at age 22 and married, he started his own company. He worked out of a 5-foot by 8-foot printing room at his dad's auto garage and prepared his printing stencils in the spare bathroom of a mobile home.

He emphasizes that one should never quit learning, regardless of your education level. The college-dropout has built up a library of books and audiotapes on business, self-improvement, and success, particularly Mackay's materials, and strongly advises everyone to continually read and learn.

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**10 Tips From**  
***SuperQuickLessons 5 Proven Skills of Business Success***  
**by Randy Clay**

1. It's more important to start a relationship than it is to close a sale.
2. Learn as much as you can about the person you desire to do business with. People can tell if you really care about them and really caring are the key to developing relationships.
3. If you think a refund is costly, wait until you see the price of lost business.
4. A contact file is profitless unless it is used. I don't know about you, but maintaining my network is as important to me as my vehicle maintenance because I am extremely dependent upon both to get me somewhere in life.
5. With all of the communication technology available today, I personally don't think anything can compare to the voice of someone you want to visit with.
6. Know the difference between an incident and a problem. You'll find that an incident is usually something that has never happened this way before. Make sure everyone involved understands why it happened, and always have a plan to keep it from happening again. If you see an incident happen again and again, you now have a problem.
7. It's not whom you know, but "what you know" about who you know that matters!
8. Striking up conversations is one skill that you should never leave home without.
9. Your team is a reflection of your management style.
10. Most people don't like being constantly reminded of their mistakes. And they don't particularly care for the person reminding them either.

## *Excerpts*

Randy Clay's new book, *SuperQuickLessons: 5 Proven Skills of Business Success*, offers practical advice and time-tested wisdom from running his successful small business for 22 years of profitability. Here are excerpts from his book on two key areas: sales and employee relations:

### **Sales Advice**

“Just remember that it's more important to start a relationship than it is to close a sale.”

“Continued business usually follows those who invest in someone else's business.”

“Over the years, I've made it my No. 1 priority to learn as much as I can about the person I desire to do business with. When it comes to actually finding out information, one of my favorite avenues is to first develop a relationship with the receptionist and/or the personal assistant to the person I'm wanting to reach.”

“People can tell if you really care about them, and really caring is the key to developing relationships. People will always be drawn to those who take a moment to show true interest!”

“Over the years, one thing I've learned about selling is that it has always been easier to sell people things they want than it is to sometimes sell them what they need.”

### **Employee Relations**

“One of the things over the years I have come to detest is the attitude that basically says, “I'm not going to do anything more than I have to do in order to get a paycheck.” After a while, I found that the paycheck all of a sudden isn't big enough anymore, and some people begin to think that they should make more money just because they've been around a long time. With all the layoffs and downsizing we have seen, I hope people are starting to see that just because you show up doesn't necessarily mean you're worth keeping.”

“If you think a refund is costly, wait until you see the price of ‘lost business.’”

“I want to challenge you to take an inventory of your vocabulary and speaking habits. Ask yourself if the things you are constantly saying are actually adding to your life or taking away from it.”

# Randy Clay's

## *SuperQuick* Q&A

There are 28 million small business owners, but many of them will be bankrupt in just a few years. Why? **1. Not developing the business skills that keep you in business. 2. Not understanding business finance, (ie. basic accounting, tax laws and corporate structures.)**

What are four lessons you've learned as a businessman that you feel compelled to share with others? **1. Get an accountant that knows how to communicate and can develop tax strategies. 2. Get a general understanding about business finance. Learn how to read income statements and balance sheets. 3. Get all the knowledge you can about people management. 4. Learn how to network and build relationships.**

What are three fears experienced by most small business people and how should one address them? **The first fear without a doubt is the fear of failure. When the stats are declaring that 9 out of 10 businesses fail within the first 3 -5 years, and the fact that everyone knows somebody that "tried that and failed," the odds appear against you. My favorite acronym for F.E.A.R. is False Evidence Appearing Real. The only way to conquer fear is to gain superior knowledge. The second fear is usually what your imagination can tell you when you start to experience cash-flow problems. The third is found in the arena of people management. In many of my presentations I share that someone has already written a book or held a seminar to build a business person up in these areas.**

Randy, you started your own business without the benefit of a college degree in the early 80's. Would you recommend people follow in your footsteps or do you now believe a college degree is necessary? Why? **I really believe that the college question is entirely up to the individual. Looking back at history and even recent history, we find that a college degree does not necessarily guarantee the success most people are hoping to find. We also find there are many who have reached a level of success, that most people will only dream about, that never finished college.**

After reading *Swim With The Sharks* by best-selling author Harvey Mackay, you were clearly inspired to success. How did his book impact you? **It really defined what type of business I wanted to have. Many of the philosophies about business that Harvey wrote about were exactly what I had envisioned my company to be like. His best-seller also gave me a great pattern to copy as to how I should even conduct myself in the marketplace.**

Can you give an example of how you motivate your employees? **The pat on the back is back! Taking a moment to pull a team member aside and letting them know how much they are appreciated and how valuable they are to the**

team works well. We also have birthday parties and the occasional surprise performance bonuses.

**How does one out negotiate the big competition? One phrase that Harvey Mackay beat into my head was, "Know Thine Enemy!"** Even though I have great relationships with my competitors, there is not one I'll go head to head with until I know everything I possibly can about how they do business. I'm looking for the things they are not providing that I have found to be the potential client's needs. My chapter titled, "Next in Line," illustrates this perfectly.

**You say that one of the most valuable things you've observed is learning how successful people are fanatical networkers. Any tips or strategies on this? If you are afraid of meeting new people as a business person you are in a big heap of trouble. I suggest you develop your people skills first by reading a great book, entitled, *Be A People Person* by John C. Maxwell. The second thing is go to business functions where people are and start striking up conversations. Just ask someone a question and they'll usually take it from there. People love talking about their favorite subjects and it's usually themselves.**

**You are methodical when it comes to knowing as much as you can about the person you desire to do business with. What is important to know and how do you find out what you need to know? I first learned want to do business with are just that. People. They have a life outside of their business career. I like to know what that life consists of. People like doing business with people they like! One way to become likable is to show a genuine interest in the person because they're human like you. The best way to find out about a person is what I call in my book, the "All about them lunch."**

**Randy, you emphasize we should all be on a self-improvement adventure. How can someone get started in that process? If you've lived on this planet very long surely by now you have come to know your weak areas. (if you still aren't sure, ask a friend). Once you've identified those areas start looking for books, tapes or mentors that can help. I guarantee someone else on this planet has gone through what you are going through and made it! And always stick with the winners.**

**What are some trends you've seen develop in the last few years that either boost-or doom-small businesses? Certain doom will be the result of not recognizing the power of the World Wide Web. If you're not on it by early 2006, it's going to be very difficult to catch up.**

**What mistakes do people make when putting together a network of contacts? Not having a system in which to manage the contacts. Anyone can buy a card scanner and build a list but it's what the list represents that makes the difference. It should represent the people and the relationships you've developed with them.**

One of your speeches on the circuit is about lessons from your mom. How did she inspire you and what can we learn from her? You're referring to my program , "Momma Said...10 things Momma knew that can get you your next job." Most moms are chocked full of common sense. It seems that common sense is becoming more uncommon. Simple things like "I don't think it's good for you to hang around those negative people", is still pretty good advice.

*SuperQuickLessons 5 Proven Skills Of Business Success*, has a bonus chapter on bad clichés. What are some clichés you really hate and why? The cliché I can't stand the most is "What you don't know can't hurt you." I've found out that in business there are some things you better know if you want to stay in business. Another one is the answer you sometimes hear to the question, "What do you think?" My team now knows that I won't tolerate the answer," I try not to."

Your company, U.S. Safety Sign and Decal, manufactures signs, decals, and stickers for the oil and gas industry. How did you balance planning for it's future growth while currently seeking to execute a successful business now? You first need to understand the difference between a business owner and being self employed. Several years ago I turned US SafetySign & Decal into a system company. I have a president who runs it. I don't really try to do anything unless I know that I can find someone to run it better than me.

It obviously became a passion of yours to meet Harvey Mackay. How did you eventually meet your mentor? Every year after I read his book, I called Harvey's office to see if he is going to be speaking anywhere near Tulsa. Every year was, "Not this year." Finally in 2000 he came to Tulsa and I had the chance to meet him. Needless to say I made sure he would never forget me. I have a chapter in my book titled, "Finally Meeting Harvey," which gives the account of that great day!

What advice would you have for people who want to meet the person that has influenced them the way Harvey Mackay has you? Always remember there is a difference between an admirer and a stalker. Most of my opportunities to meet those that have made an impact in my business career have come with GREAT patience and I guess some divine intervention. I have found that most celebrities do have events for their followers. Book signings, seminars, conferences and even appreciation events are great ways to meet your hero.