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## THE SURPRISINGLY LARGE COST OF TELLING SMALL LIES

By: Mark Setash, President and CEO, Professional Credential Services, Inc.

I was recently handed an article entitled "The Surprisingly Large Cost of Telling Small Lies" by Rebekah Campbell, Chief Executive of Posse. While Rebekah was unable to allow me/us to reprint that article, her blog entitled "One of the worst things you can do in business and in life, and we do it all the time" carried a similar message.

Ms. Campbell wrote "I caught up with one of our investors in Auckland a few weeks ago - Peter, a wise chap who's had a lot of success. Our conversation drifted from a company update to general advice and on to a deep discussion about life itself. This gentleman has everything: high-performing investments, a great family, many friends and an awesome lifestyle in New Zealand. So I asked him, what's the secret? I expected a reply like 'never give up', or some other standard, bumper-sticker answer. What he said took me off guard. 'The most important key to success in business and life is to never, ever, ever tell a lie.'

Wow. That took me a couple of minutes to process; I'd never thought of honesty like this. As a child, I learned that telling lies was bad. To be good, I should tell the truth. As an adult, I don't tell outright lies but there are times when I've been guilty of exaggerating or omitting facts for my own advantage. I'd only ever

thought about honesty as bad verses good. Peter views honesty as the access to ultimate power.

If we were honest about it, we'd admit we all lie every day. A recent study of 2000 Britons found that the average man lied six times per day and the average woman three times per day. The same study found that 40% of



people lied on their resumes and a whopping 90% of people looking for a date online lie in their profile. The study didn't investigate the number of lies told by entrepreneurs looking for investment, but it would be interesting. Peter asks the same two questions after every pitch he sees. "What is your customer delight story?" and, "What's the lie in what you just told me?" He says there's always one, and as soon as the entrepreneur admits it and opens up

with the truth, they can start managing what to do next.

Some lies are big and others small. Children lie to avoid punishment or impress other kids on the playground. Adults can lie to gain respect, like a former intern who told an employer he'd worked with us as a 'research assistant'. People lie to stave off the consequences of making a mistake or to spare someone's feelings. Their heart may be in the right place, but they're still telling a lie.

Peter thinks telling lies is the #1 reason why entrepreneurs fail. Not because telling lies makes you a bad person, but because the act of lying takes you out of the present moment and prevents you from facing the truth about your business. Every time you exaggerate a metric, under-report a cost, or are less than transparent with your team, you create a false reality, and start living in it. In that moment when you told a lie you knew the right action and chose another. You separated yourself from what was happening around you, lost control of the situation and soon focused on managing the fallout from the lie. I know people who appear to spend their entire careers inflating the truth and fighting to meet the expectations they've set. (continued on pg. 2)

Peter's philosophy is based on Buddhist teachings: the present is a more peaceful, creative and productive place from which to operate. Everyone knows the right actions to take; by having the confidence to accept your surroundings you can make right decisions and be open to opportunities that come your way. His commitment to remaining in the present borders on spiritual; only by remaining in the moment, being honest with yourself and others, can you trust that the true outcome will emerge.

Our conversation inspired me to test the theory over the past couple of months. I've focused on telling the absolute truth all the time and being ultra transparent even when I didn't need to be. It wasn't easy but I have to say it transformed my sense of peace, and coincided with the company's most productive period yet. Coincidence?

Two weeks ago, I experienced the dark side of dishonesty. I've been involved in a charity organization for a few years now. We do a lot of great work in the community, but as a group we've

always floundered, and our projects never reach their potential. We've had a stream of difficult people in the organization but I couldn't identify the root cause of the problem. Then it struck me: I discovered a senior member of the organization lying. Not a whopper, just insignificant tales about why someone couldn't make a meeting, why emails hadn't been read, why he was late and so on. When I confronted him, he immediately admitted them, justifying his actions by saying they avoided irritating consequences.

As soon as I caught the first lie, it was obvious why the organization wasn't working. Within it lay a culture of avoiding reality; no one trusted each other. The result was a culture of obfuscation and back stabbing in which nothing was achieved. Volunteers became disheartened with the politics and lack of progress, and eventually they left.

Truth and its relationship to creativity, peace and ultimately success have played on my mind in the past couple

of months. If you've read this post and thought, "that doesn't relate to me - I never tell a lie," then you're probably lying to yourself. For one week, try being transparent about everything. I'm confident you'll find it both difficult and worthwhile, and that it'll make a big difference to your business. I seldom adopt esoteric business philosophies but its impact has been such that I believe this powerful secret should be talked about."

In our industry (the testing marketplace), I learned long ago that mistakes happen and that customers are capable of understanding this. However, no customer can tolerate a system of lies and cover-ups. Thus, our philosophy is and will continue to be in concert with Ms. Campbell's blog (and Peter's thinking). That is – admit immediately to your error, explain and take ownership of the consequences, make restitution when necessary, and ensure that it never happens again. An honest, if not altogether easy, strategy to employ. )

## COME AND SEE HOW GOOD I LOOK!

At PCS, we are constantly, and tactically, thinking how we can better enhance our end-users' website experience. As Ron Burgandy said in the movie Anchorman, "I look good. I mean, really good. Hey everyone! Come and see how good I look!"

We're not comedic movie stars at PCS, but we'll piggyback off his line and ask everyone to come check out our updated and more aesthetically pleasing website ([www.pcshq.com](http://www.pcshq.com)). We've added some more pizzazz to our new homepage that

includes, but is not limited to, a smooth-transitioning gradient background and improved header images. Additionally, the homepage now sports an image slider, larger navigation buttons, more links to get you where you're headed more efficiently, and lots more color.

We welcome any feedback from our readers and we implore you to let us know how we're doing. Just click on the "Contact Us" icon to shoot us a message. It's how we stay a cut above the rest to provide "Solutions That Exceed Expectations." )

### CLIENT PORTAL

Log in to view applicant data, run reports, manage the approval process, and much more.

### APPLICANTS & CANDIDATES

Find your licensure/certification information, create your application record, or register for examinations.

### SERVICES

PCS specializes in examination administration, psychometrics, test development, licensing, certification, and credentialing services for government, non-profit, and commercial organizations responsible for the regulation and management of occupations and professions.

We make switching vendors easy.



### TAKING AN EXAM

LOGIN TO YOUR ACCOUNT  
FIND YOUR PROFESSION  
I LIVE IN PUERTO RICO

### LATEST NEWS

PRESS RELEASES  
CONNECTS NEWSLETTER  
PCS HOLIDAYS  
TRADE SHOWS

### HELPFUL LINKS

BOARD LINKS  
CAREERS  
ABOUT US  
SERVICES

# CLIENT CORNER: TENNESSEE

Just the other day I was riding the elevator down to the ground floor in PCS' building. I was casually making my way to my vehicle that was waiting amidst the last of the cold wintry air and anticipating my drive home. On my elevator ride down,

I was accompanied by a young man carrying a red fire extinguisher. There was nothing odd about the way he was holding it or anything, but it made me feel good knowing that PCS is helping to keep our community safe. Keep reading and I'll explain what I mean.

Think back to the last time that you walked through a mall, grocery store, hotel, or marina and saw a red fire extinguisher on the wall; just "hanging" out, waiting to send any size fire to its demise. Ever wondered if that extinguisher would actually work when the time comes to put it to work? Don't worry the next time you see one and wonder that; licensed professionals are in charge of inspecting these life and building saving contraptions;

making sure that they perform when needed and one less thing for the general public to worry about. The state of Tennessee contracts with PCS to develop, schedule, and administer both the Fire Extinguisher Specialists and Fire Extinguisher Technicians examination. A Fire Extinguisher Specialist services portable fire extinguishers or fixed fire extinguisher systems. The specialist inspects and approves installation and repair or servicing. A Fire Extinguisher Technician installs and/or repairs fire extinguishing systems for a company. These two examinations are based on standards published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and we happily administer these exams on the second Tuesday of every month.

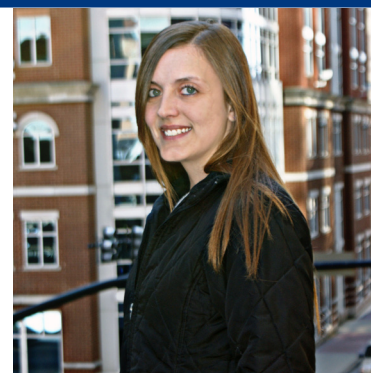
Back to my story...so being the intrigued and personal individual I am, I "sparked" up a quick conversation with the gentleman. "So, are you here to inspect those?" I asked. He smiled and responded, "Yes sir, how did you know?" I mentioned that I work for PCS and that we administer the examination he likely took to become licensed on behalf of the State of Tennessee. About that time, we had made our way to the front doors of the building. We parted ways; I to make my way home, him to protect the public some more, one extinguisher at a time.

By: Jonathan Totty, Sales and Marketing Associate, Professional Credential Services, Inc.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

### Nicole Holston

Nicole joined our team in July 2012. She began her career with PCS performing Data Entry; however, she has recently been promoted to Team Leader of the Data Entry Department. A 2011 graduate of Columbia State Community College, Nicole holds an Associate Degree in Business Management. She is the youngest of four children - having 3 older brothers. Nicole recently purchased her first home.



### Leslie Moore

Leslie re-joined PCS as an Engineering and Surveying Coordinator in 2012 and was recently promoted to Engineering Program Manager. Previously, Leslie worked for PCS as an Engineering and Surveying Coordinator for Puerto Rico and Wisconsin. In her spare time, Leslie and her husband of 5 years, are Lead Pastors at Gateway A.G. in Ashland City, TN.







# ReMarks

*from the desk of Mark Setash*

As I was reminded again in March, I must have meteorologist blood coursing through my veins. As such, we had a brutally cold winter here in Nashville. Unlike much of the country though, we avoided most of the snow and ice that plagued so many of you. Now, as spring arrived and we set our clocks forward, we began to warm and optimism was once again allowed to enter our spirits.

During the past couple of months we have had cause for celebration at PCS. Several of our longer-term customers have chosen to renew their contracts with us. These include our Tennessee fire contracts (close in proximity and close to our hearts) as well as Massachusetts contracts in the healthcare arena.

Looking forward, we have several internal and customer-related initiatives underway that will benefit us as well as one of our customers/partners. That is, we hope to migrate our email package very shortly to Microsoft Office 365 (actually, Outlook is probably a better description). While the product we currently use is reportedly very close to Outlook in functionality, Outlook is the industry-standard and should assist us with our daily communications. And, I note this

because email is such an integral part of our business lives – as important today as our phones were twenty years ago. On the Human Resource front, and under the tutelage of Mr. Sean Hainer, we are moving in several different positive directions. Employees are being reclassified to better service them and PCS' needs, we are moving to ADP for payroll, and we are beginning to better track our time spent on daily activities. The intuitive tools on ADP's platform will greatly aide PCS in this endeavor.

Recently, I read an article that warned about the threat of complacency. It discussed complacency as a threat to quality, service, and motivation. Even though these words and thoughts were expressed by a competitor, we strongly share this thinking. Each and every day our employees provide top-notch, quality customer service to candidates/applicants the world over. While we are not perfect, we strive to be. Interestingly, as one of my dear friends (who is also a PCS partner/customer) reminds me, perfection is an elusive goal – with its own set of consequences.

*Mark Setash*

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