

# What I Learned About Banking While Waterskiing

*Tom and Kyle Hershberger*



**CROSS**  
FINANCIAL

# What I Learned About Banking While Water Skiing

## 1. You Need A Skier – Dedicated Employees

- The skier needs to have an interest in skiing and a desire to learn
- The skier needs to be willing to take risks as they pursue personal growth
- The skier must be willing to be part of a team – they can't ski by themselves
- Someone committed to goal achievement and willing to challenge themselves to reach specific goals
- Top performers are a diverse group – but they share success-oriented attributes
- Good skiers know they can always learn something new
- They know there are people that ski better than they do
- They know they can learn from many sources and outside influences
  - Other skiers
  - Clinics
  - Workshops
  - Conferences
  - Coaches
  - How To articles and videos
  - Industry newsletters and publications
- They develop resources that match their learning preferences
- They know that skiing is made up of a lot of little things done correctly, not just one big skill

## 2. You Need A Driver – Skilled Leaders and Managers

- Someone with leadership skills and a good sense of direction
- The driver needs to know how to operate the boat, so the passengers and skiers feel safe and comfortable
- The driver is responsible for clarifying the rules of engagement – what the driver and skier must do to ensure safety for everyone
- The driver should not make the skier nervous - they know how to avoid drowning the skier with a big wake
- Great drivers create non-threatening environments for skiers

## 3. You Need Observers – Peer Support and Teamwork

- Someone to watch you ski and celebrate your success
- A member of the team that makes skiing enjoyable
- People who will support accountability with all team members
- In many cases, a fellow skier that will look for your encouragement when it's their turn to ski
- Skiing by default is a team sport
- You need at least two people to make skiing possible
- When you get up for the first time, you need someone there to celebrate your success
- Praise and positive reinforcement is extremely important when a skier is learning a new skill
  - A boat load of observers can do this for a new skier
  - Teams can do it in banking

## 4. You Need The Right Equipment – Technology, Systems and Delivery Channels

- Your equipment must be modern, appropriate and powerful enough to support the variety of skiers you will be pulling
- Proper equipment will improve success
- Your boat must be fast enough to operate at adequate speeds to keep up with the needs of the skier and the audiences entertained by their efforts
- Don't let dated or under-powered equipment hold back the talents of your skiers
- The quality of the equipment must improve with the skier's performance
- Once you conquer the physical techniques, improvements in equipment take on a more significant role to improve performance
- Using safety equipment like life jackets will increase confidence in an unknown environment
- Your equipment may not be fully utilized until the skier improves their ability
- Sometimes the skier must grow into the quality of the equipment
- There is an important balance between how much equipment is necessary and how much is too much
- Skiers should not be asked to perform at levels beyond what the equipment can support
- Training programs and skills development are critical to ensure that all of the features and benefits of the equipment are being fully utilized

## 5. You Need A Coach – Effective Managers and Supervisors

- Someone who is focused on helping you learn new skills
- Sometimes the driver and the coach are the same person, but it's difficult to drive effectively if you are looking behind you and studying the skier's performance
- A coach needs to be knowledgeable and experienced
- The coach acknowledges small improvements that allow the skier to build on the positives
- The coach is a source of constant encouragement
- The coach will develop a process for learning new skills
  - Describe the skill
  - Help prepare for and observe the first attempt
  - Evaluate and encourage the second attempt
  - Encourage the skier to learn from each attempt
- Coaches find ways to make learning new skills comfortable, exciting and fun
  - Bend the knees
  - Stand up straighter
  - Move your hips to improve your balance on the skies
- The coach needs to be the primary source of information for the skier
- The coach needs to help regulate the speed to make sure it is appropriate with the abilities of the skier
- The coach knows when to try a skill and when to wait and make the attempt another day
- Skiers will reach comfort zones where trying new skills is no longer a desire
  - Their coach may tell them they have the talent to go from two skies to slalom, but they lack the confidence to try the new skill
  - Coaches will then identify the skier's peak performance within the skills they are comfortable using
- Coaches will always challenge for growth
- Once a skill is learned the coach will train for improvements in style, comfort, strength and other appropriate techniques
- Good coaches know when a skier has reached their comfortable physical and mental limits

- Good coaches also know which skiers are up to the challenge of always learning something new - skiers that seek adventure and are not deterred by failure
- Good coaches know that great people skills do not come naturally to everyone – they work hard to connect with the skiers to create an effective teaching environment
- Through coaching and mentoring you can help people achieve results and build confidence to pursue higher skill levels
- Coaches know how to balance the skier's performance expectations with their skiing talents – this helps to reduce stress caused by unrealistic goals
- Coaches have realistic expectations for what the skier can accomplish each time they begin a ski run

## 6. You Need Goals – Desired Outcomes

- Decide upfront what you are trying to accomplish so we can direct our efforts and activities toward achieving a specific goal
- Challenge yourself to go beyond your current skill level
  - Two skies to slalom, slalom to trick, trick to wakeboard
  - Enjoy the diversity it provides
- Do you want things to be safe and comfortable or risky and challenging
- Set some goals that seem outrageous but possible
- A change in our attitude and perspective can make the less pleasant days into success-filled days, if we are willing to adjust and change
- Good skiers set their desires on long-term improvements, but they also work to achieve short-term goals that give them opportunities to reward each effort
- If you are committed to improving your skills, you will always be focused on the efforts required to get there – even when conditions aren't perfect
  - There are days when the water is cold or rough or the air cold
  - Days when skiing isn't going to be as much fun as usual
  - These are the days that committed skiers still make the attempts and still practice for improvement
- Enjoy yourself and you will make your efforts worthwhile and rewarding
- When it all works the personal satisfaction, you feel will be a powerful fuel for your next attempt at a new skill
- Celebrating success makes it easier to adopt new behaviors and skills
- Look for ways to keep the sport enjoyable, fun and engaging
- Celebrating success encourages skier to repeat their performances
- Praise is critically important when someone tries something new...first attempts contain risk and when they result in success the rewards should be extraordinary

## 7. You Need Fuel – Consistent Profitability

- There are ongoing expenses for gas and equipment maintenance that must be met to keep the skiers skiing
  - Profits provide the resources for ongoing growth and success
- You need sufficient fuel to continue operating the boat so skiers can improve their skills
- There has to be enough fuel to allow skiers to repeat their attempts at achieving a new skill
- A sufficient volume of fuel is a key ingredient if you plan to insure there will be continued opportunities to improve

## 8. You Need Effective Communication – Clear, Concise, Frequent Messages

- You need good communication between the driver and the skier
  - Discuss the hand signals before you start skiing
  - Discuss when and how to start
  - What speed will be most appropriate
  - When to stop
  - Where to drive
- Drivers need to be an excellent communicator with various groups to insure an enjoyable safe experience
  - Driver to skier
  - Driver to people riding in the boat
  - Driver to people on the beach
  - Driver to people fueling or servicing the boat
- Good drivers will encourage communications and will establish a structure for the feedback
- Communications from multiple sources will confuse the skier unless the message is unified
  - A boat full of people who know how to ski can lead to a half dozen opinions about what to do next
    - A boat full of know-it-alls
  - Too many instructions will only confuse the skier
  - One coach, one voice and one relationship will reduce confusion
- Each skier needs to get their information from one coach
  - One-on-one training
  - One-on-one reporting
  - One-on-one supervision

## 9. You Need To Develop New Skills – Training, Practice, and Change Management

- Be prepared for sacrifice
- Begin with basic conditioning for a proper foundation
- You don't always get the best jobs – sometimes you must just do the work and get it done
- Develop a sequence for skill development
  1. Start in the wake
  2. Conquer the wake
  3. Ski with confidence outside the wake
  4. Optimize your potential
- When you get comfortable, its time to try something new
- Trying new skills can be risky – you could fail or fall or injure yourself, but without the attempt you won't experience the strong feeling that comes from accomplishing something new and growing personally in the process
  - Falls aren't fun – they can hurt just like failure
- It's easier to learn things before your activities turn into habits – learn as much as you can early in the process
- You can always remember the places where you learned the most
- Many times, the water outside the wake is smoother than inside the wake, but it is safer inside the wake if rough water or waves are your concern
- Comfort with new skills can produce enjoyment and a desire to continue
- Skiers create comfort through repetition and success
- Good skiers try to learn from each experience
  - They know how good it feels the first time they succeed at a new skill

- Some people make skiing look easy – then you try to do what they can do and find out how difficult it really is
  - Some skiers are naturals – they just have all the right skills
  - They can't always tell you how to do it, but they get the job done – learning from these skiers requires good observation skills rather than one-on-one teaching
- Even the greatest skiers didn't get it right on their first attempt
- Feeling the balance on skies is more difficult for some people
- Cross train to optimize your physical and mental skills

## 10. You Need To Recharge – Work-Life Balance

- Take time off
- Spend time with friends and develop relationships that don't have anything to do with skiing
- Get away from the regular routine
  - Fish, sunbath, float, eat great food, BBQ with friends
- Recharge yourself so you are equipped to succeed when effort is important
- Don't ski every day, you don't want work to become a burden
- Stop and look around you – enjoy the beauty of living your unique experience

## What I Learned About Banking While Water Skiing

What we need to ski...	What we need at the bank...
1. Skier .....	Dedicated employees
2. Driver .....	Skilled leaders and managers
3. Observers .....	Peer support and teamwork
4. Equipment .....	Modern technology and resources
5. Coach .....	Excellent managers and supervisors
6. Goals .....	Desired outcomes
7. Fuel.....	Financial performance
8. Communication.....	Clear, concise, frequent messages
9. New skills.....	Training, practice and change management
10. Recharge .....	Work-life balance



Lincoln, Nebraska  
 402.441.3131  
 crossfinancial.com



Lincoln, Nebraska  
crossinancial.com  
402.441.3131