

Richard Hayes

Measurable Success

If you're one of the government's top agencies and you need to solve the world's next greatest problem, the person that you need to speak to is Dr. Richard "Dick" Hayes and his company, Evidenced Based Research, Inc. (EBR) whose all-star team has taken on issues such as terrorism, political instability, currency movement and measuring successful careers in the intelligence community, just to name a few.

Founded in 1987, EBR serves their clients by gathering data, analyzing that data and developing models to create better answers for the initially presented problem. By 1988, the company had developed to the point where Dick needed to place an ad in the Washington Post to recruit enough talent to handle the company's growing needs.

For EBR, everything was looking good and all signs pointed to go. Three years in, Dick received a call from an employee at a large defense firm.

Dick recalls, "She said, 'Let me introduce myself. I want to join your team for the Army's recompetes of a contract for the Army's Command and Control Evaluation System.'" This was a system that I had invented while I was at my previous firm and had lead the team on, but I wasn't sure whether I wanted to work on any projects with the Department of Defense (DoD) at that time. So I said to her, "Why would you want to join my team?" and she said, "Because the story is that you're going to win the contract," and I thought to myself, "perhaps we should bid this contract."

"The contract was to update the system for the Army but the problem was that we were very small and we didn't have enough people who 'speak' command and control. We needed to be at 51% in order to qualify as a small business prime.

So I subcontracted with her company and some folks out at George Mason University. I ended up having to give away 49% in order to get the talent needed for the project."

Today, EBR has created its own specialty brand, with a senior staff boasting a broad range of expertise and specializations alongside young, bright, and energetic researchers. In 1988, EBR had five employees and today they have twenty-five, though at one point they had as many as 60 staff members. Unfortunately, due to an insurmountable disparity in belief systems, a branch of the company transitioned away by mutual agreement.

"I am more interested in doing interesting work with interesting people than I am with making the company as big as possible," Dick states, "I don't mind growth; I know how to coach it. I think it's more important to do what you find interesting and important and to follow your own rules; and our rules are that we want to be a financial, moral and technical success. If we get outside of any of those

boxes then I think that we have to make some adjustments and change the company."

Another of EBR's rules is that they strive to hire good people and then help them to grow.

Born to parents who stressed the importance of education, Dick's father was a senior Navy Warrant Officer, who was regularly away at sea. His mother was a homemaker who took a very active role in the community on the naval base, often known as the best lady plumber on the base and serving as catcher on the baseball team.

"My father set the tone but my mother ran the house. She was a little bitty woman, but she was the disciplinarian. When she put up one finger and came at you, you knew you had done something that you shouldn't have."



Though his family moved around quite a bit during his early years, his parents decided that they wanted to establish one home for Dick and his brother through their high school years. They choose to buy a house in Norfolk, Virginia because it was well-positioned for Dick's father to be able to get either a sea-based or land-based post and they would still be able to spend the 6 years of their two sons' high school education in one place.

Unfortunately, in the summer between Dick's sophomore and junior year, the city of Norfolk decided to close the doors of its junior and senior high schools rather than integrate eleven students. When Norfolk closed down the schools, everyone assumed that the Navy would open schools on the base to educate the children of their service men and women, but the federal government overrode any decision, because they did not want to support the city and its actions, so there were no schools.

When no resolution had been found by mid-September, Dick's family discussed the options and it was decided that Dick would move back, alone, to his parent's home town of Wheeling, West Virginia to complete his schooling.

"So I got on a Greyhound bus to Wheeling, West Virginia and when I arrived I was picked up by my great-uncle, who was in his mid-80's. I remember being terrified as we drove to his house because he didn't drive very well. He was generous enough to offer me a place to stay for a couple of weeks and I went down to the local high school and enrolled myself. It turned out to be a wonderful school. Most of my teachers had taught both of my parents. And so, in those two weeks, I found a place to live and set myself up and for the next two years I lived, really, on the generosity of the community. The families in Wheeling were very nice. I had an uncle who lived a few miles out of town and I would go to visit him on some weekends. The teachers in the high school and the other students all welcomed me on sports teams and in theatre, debate and other activities that were being held at the high school.

I had to work hard, because I was behind from the time that I had missed of the school year already. I was able to pick-up some part-time jobs at Oglebay Park, like waiting tables and working at the concession stand and then later on, when I could drive, as park ranger, and in the summer I could stay up there (they had housing for employees) and I could eat in the lodge, which

made life a little easier. It was a wonderful adventure, but I wouldn't wish it on a kid, because you have to solve very difficult problems and for a 15 year old, they are hard problems... But it was an opportunity to grow and when I graduated, I'm proud to say, I was a National Merit Finalist."

One day, while in high school, Dick was called into the Dean of Boys' office to discuss his future plans.

"I was a smart kid and so most adults would ask me what I planned to do after high school; what I wanted to be when I grew up. So I would tell them that I wanted to be a chemical engineer because that would usually shut them up. Well one day, I was called into the office of the Dean of Boys who had picked out the top 5 schools for chemical engineering for me to apply to. I'm sitting on this Naugahyde couch and I'm thinking, "Oh my God, these people are serious." But they were flexible enough that when I figured out that I was really interested in the foreign service, they identified the top 5 schools for foreign service."

Dick was accepted at Georgetown University and after graduating from high school, he matriculated, majoring in foreign service. It was while at Georgetown that Dick joined the debate team learning some of the very skills that he puts into action today.

"On the debate team I was the first negative, whose job it was to quickly overwhelm the opponent's argument, which meant that you had to be a good researcher, think well on your feet, and talk fast. By the time I graduated, I was able to defeat anyone on the team at Georgetown and they had one of the top teams in the country. Debate gave me training in argument and research and getting up in front of a group of people."

It was during his mandatory years of Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) training at Georgetown that Dick decided to accept his commission and went on active duty with the Army. Within two months, he would be sent to officer basic training. Dick chose the artillery school track, hoping to be further away from the action, but, in fact, ended up being in the thick of things with his specialization. After completing his basic training, Dick was deployed to Vietnam.

Dick rose in the ranks, building upon his leadership skills and utilizing his varied knowledge and education to benefit his missions and his unit.

Once, when he was a Fire Direction

Officer, Dick and his unit were working in a swamp, preparing the area for their artillery use. Normally, they were picked up by air transport by late in the afternoon, but on this day they couldn't be pulled out. They were informed that they were going to have to stay in the swamp overnight.

Dick assessed the situation and, after nightfall, made everyone move the howitzers and equipment away from the position that they had been in during the day and, once that was completed, they dug the holes that they would sleep in that night. Because of the cold and muck in the swamp, many of the men didn't dig their holes deep, so Dick made the entire unit correct their holes in order to provide protection and be a good defense. As he predicted, the area where they had been positioned during the day was mortared that night, and though they were a short distance away, no one was hurt or killed in action.

Several months later, one of the men from his unit was being rotated out and in his exit interview Dick asked the soldier what he was going to do when he returned home. The soldier responded that he was going to go to college and when Dick asked why, the soldier reminded Dick of that night in the swamp and he said, "I swore to myself on that night that instead of being the SOB what's digging the holes, I'm going to be the SOB what's deciding how deep the holes are going to be."

While he was still on active duty, Dick decided that, after he got out of the military, he wanted to go to graduate school and study government. He reached out to two of his previous professors and visited them to discuss where he should apply.

"One of them asked me where I stood on the behavioral revolution and I said, "what is the behavioral revolution?" He went on to tell me how the study of government was changing and that people were using science (they called it political science not government) and scientific tools to build databases and models and provide research that was really formal and quantitative. There was a split going on within scholarly departments between the quantitative guys and those who were resisting and still studying government. He told me that I needed to decide which I wanted to study. I couldn't choose so he provided me with a list of schools that had both approaches. I picked five schools, applied and was accepted at Indiana University."

While studying at Indiana University, Dick met and married his wife, Margaret, who was studying at the university as well. Upon graduation, they decided to seek work in a city where they both could find employment. Eventually, they ended up both interviewing for positions in Washington, DC; Dick at American University as a professor and Margaret at CACI, a professional services and IT solutions company. Margaret was offered a position at CACI and the company reached out to Dick to ask him to come in for an interview. During his interview, Dick detailed the many ways that he would improve on the organization and structure of the company. Unfortunately, the executive who handled those areas within the company was in the room and he felt threatened by Dick and his suggestions. A few days later, Dick received a call from CACI offering him the position of the executive (who has quit). Dick and Margaret discussed it and Dick accepted, contingent upon the stipulation that his wife wouldn't report to him. They started working together but, within six months, the head of the other department quit and CACI moved both teams under Dick, meaning his wife was now reporting to him. The new arrangement did not work, and a year and a half later, Margaret accepted a position at John's Hopkins Center for Brazilian Studies.

After seven years with CACI, Dick became concerned with the company's rate of growth. He decided to step away and look for other opportunities. He was soon approached to join a colleague at his company, Defense Systems, Inc. (DSI) to help diversify the company. DSI worked in defense and intelligence analytics. After a few years, Dick's partner wanted to move into the field of low-orbiting satellites, and Dick took his stock options and decided that he was ready to create his own company, EBR.

"I decided to do what I knew best - to sell and deliver analytical products to the defense and intelligence agencies. At that point I had 15 years in the business and I believed that I knew how to run a company and so I set-up a one man company. A year later I hired my first five people and so we were launched."

Dick shares that he is most proud of his wife and son and what a great young man he is growing up to be. In business, Dick is proud of the impact that his company and his team have had on policy and government; how they were able to

provide tools so that better decisions could be possible.

“When you build something that people can use, and they keep using it, that is success. The fact that people now believe that they need to do the quantitative study, that they need to take the case studies and find out what they have in common, find out what is different, and build a model of what is better, so they can have a tool to solve new problems, that is success.”

Dr. Richard “Dick” Hayes is an extremely intelligent, well-educated, fair and just leader, who is not only interested in data and the acquisition of better answers but also in people and finding out what makes them tick. A proud husband and father and an expert scientist, Dick has created success with whatever cards he was dealt. No matter what scale or unit of measure you use, Dr. Richard Hayes is the marker of success.

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About Gordon J. Bernhardt

President and founder of Bernhardt Wealth Management and author of Profiles in Success: Inspiration from Executive Leaders in the Washington D.C. Area, Gordon provides financial planning and wealth management services to affluent individuals, families and business-owners throughout the Washington, DC area. Since establishing his firm in 1994, he and his team have been focused on providing high-quality service and independent financial advice to help clients make informed decisions about their money. For more information, visit www.BernhardtWealth.com and [Gordon's Blog](#).



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