

## Alumni Spotlight

### Daniel Kyle '95



**Please provide your biographical information (major/minor at WCU, town you grew up in, reason why you came to WCU).**

Daniel Kyle, '95, BS in Marketing (College of Business and Public Affairs)

**What made you go into degree?**

I've always enjoyed creativity and interacting with people, so going for a degree in marketing really seemed like a good idea!

**What is your official title and what are your responsibilities in your current position?**

I work for a software development firm, Chariot Solutions, in Fort Washington, PA. I am their Business Development Manager. My main focus is looking for companies that engineer with the tech stacks that align with our areas of expertise, find the right contact, and reach out to introduce myself and Chariot and see if they are open to discussing in more detail about the value we provide.

**What is a typical day like at work?**

Lots of research! And then lots of emailing and calling. All necessary.

**What have been the biggest challenges at work?**

When you're interrupting someone during their day, which you are, and these are usually high-level people who are extremely busy, you want to catch their attention fast so they will engage. And people will; especially if your cordial, your message is simple but effective, and if you treat them with respect. Business development, which is essentially the first half of sales is still very much that – sales. So, sure it's a numbers game to a point, but I wouldn't make that the main focus. You just have to be willing to be rejected...A LOT.

**What do you enjoy most about your current position?**

I love it when I get to go to conferences. Especially if it involves travel (my favorite thing to do!). It's way more rewarding to sell in person to people. Face to face is more relaxed, it's non-confrontational, way more fun (if you are a talker, which I am, and aren't shy of introducing yourself to people, which many times I am not!) Plus trade shows at tech events are pretty awesome!

**What skills, talents, and other traits are useful and necessary to do your job?**

You definitely need to have high tolerance for rejection. Learning to do research before making any reach out is paramount. And you have to be more of an extrovert than an introvert. I shift both ways on that spectrum, but I do love meeting/talking to new people.

**Do you have a favorite or funny story about work?**

Well at one of my previous places of employment we were talking about irrational fears. I stated one of mine was being buried alive. My teammates thought this was funny, it is (but it's sort of true), and they even decided to help me get over my fear by saying they were going to bury me alive – 5/3. Not sure why that date! This was like in March of 2011. On 5/3/2011 one of my teammates made brownies for the special day; complete with halved Pepperidge Farm Milano cookies as mini tombstones! To this day I get "This is the year!" texts from that crew on the days leading up to May 3<sup>rd</sup>. I miss working with them. They were great.

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#### What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I'm huge into music, traveling, and running. By music, I mean listening to it. I can't play a lick!!! But I have a sizable collection of CDs, records, some old tapes, and TONS of band tees. As for travel and running, I've started to incorporate them. I'll plan vacations or weekend getaways to new places do a race then explore a new area. I love it. It brings me around the globe and the states. I even did the Fargo Marathon in 2017 in honor of Wentz (Go Birds! - But this year is brutal). I've also run marathons in Iceland, Canada, Amsterdam, and Zimbabwe. That last one was definitely one of coolest races I've ever done- it's the Victoria Falls Marathon. You run over the bridge and back and then do good 20 miles in a national park where wildlife if running free. Elephants cross the pack, giraffes, you could potentially see a lion. There are armed guards along the course (they to shoot in the air should any runner come into some danger). The coolest part was at mile 20, when I was alone as the field had opened up by then, I saw a baby rhino cross my path not 20 yards ahead. Thankfully the mother didn't come through until I was gone because that could have been scary! Then the next day I took a micro-flight above the falls and bridge and then I bungeed off the bridge post flight. One of the best times!

#### Where do you see yourself in five years?

Honestly, I never was good at this question. Hopefully sitting happily being 52!

#### What advice would you give to a current student who aspires to follow in your footsteps and pursue a similar career path?

Don't rush it. If you aren't feeling college right out of HS, do not just jump in and go to school because you feel you have to. If you feel like marketing/business development might be an interest, but you aren't sure. I know you could find job, or even a hobby that mimics a lot of it. Nothing wrong with testing it out before jumping in.

#### How has your WCU education contributed to your success?

It gave me the tools to be successful at my job. It's really that simple. I had amazing professors.

#### What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishments (both personally and professionally)?

Keeping my cat Butters alive and happy for over 11 years (well mostly happy!). Personally, it's my ability to connect with kids. I just been always good at it. I think I may one day look to get into some sort of teaching/education role. Professionally is taking a chance at a start-up that didn't take off. But the company that backed it, the one I currently work for, heard I was doing such a good job that even though they weren't looking for someone of my role at that time (they were looking to add a role like mine in a few years) they didn't want to lose me and they made it work. And they really did. It's a great company, I love working there and I love the leaders.

#### What's your favorite memory from when you were a student at WCU?

The first night there with more meaning because I was a transfer student. And just like the moment I started at the first school and knew it wasn't for me, that first night in Ramsey Hall I knew I was "home". I can literally still feel that elation I felt hanging in the common area of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor with all my new dormmates. And it felt great. It's my favorite moment, because without it, the plethora of great moments that followed never would have meant as much as they do to me.