

Darren Fisher – SPEARity™

Client of the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee SBDC

SPEARity™ founder Darren Fisher works with businesses focused on growth and scalability. That could mean startups to Fortune 500 companies, and companies on the wrong path needing a turnaround. But his company didn't start that way. He began Darren Fisher Consulting in 2000. "The reason I started it was because I was doing IT consulting for small and medium sized businesses doing hardware and user support. One client, a nonprofit, wanted to remove their Executive Director. As a board member I had to understand the reasons for removing this person from her position. They didn't have any objective reasons. I developed objectives and key skill sets for the position and began coaching this executive to better success."

While most board members might have ended the task after the coaching, Darren said that experience "Woke me up. I realized that I had developed an expertise to assisting companies with leadership development so that achieving objectives was normal, not a special event for just 'special' employees." With that epiphany, Spearity™ was born.



Does your business team struggle with constantly juggling responsibilities and working long hours? Are you ready to take your business to a new level? SPEARity™ partners with organizations like yours to create the processes, competencies, and habits needed to set and achieve goals. Through a combination of [executive coaching](#), [business coaching](#), [leadership development training](#), and [technology](#) you will learn to create an environment where every member of your team understands the goal, utilizes the resources, and finds success. www.spearity.com

Grand Plan

Darren didn't have a grand plan to become a leadership and management consultant – it was born from deciding to join the military when he was 18. "The reason I went into the Air Force was because I knew I needed discipline. I know this is very rare, but I was a very undisciplined 17 year old," he says with a laugh. "I was stationed in Germany for four years, as an avionics technician working on F16 flight, computer, and radar systems." This assignment gave this self-described geek a wonderful opportunity to develop his skills – continuous improvement, structure, organization and the knowledge of how to scale things. "I learned that teamwork, hard work, personal development, and never giving up is crucial to the success of any mission – battle or everyday tasks – and this translated back into my civilian life."



Scaling His Own Business

Darren started his business in a typical fashion. He had something to sell, so he went out and sold it. “I’m a hustler. I need to bring cash in as quickly as possible to survive for the next day. My success comes from 3 key things: 1) work hard, 2) grace of God, 3) luck. I had all 3 working for me.”

This sounds like Darren had an easy path, but he didn’t. After some real estate investment failures, Darren had to file bankruptcy over 10 years ago. “I had to get smart really quick about understanding my numbers. Number 1 – collect on your invoices. Number 2 – don’t spend more than you have. Number 3 – Build your business credit. Because of that, my business credit is great now. I needed some cash to scale recently and my bank, Chase sent me an email about applying for a quick loan. I applied on Friday, and on Saturday I had the cash.” Darren is certain that would not have been possible had he not disciplined himself about personal and business financial management.

Working with SBDC

“I knew I wanted to scale, but it was hard. So I reached out for help and found Cheryl Mitchell at UW-Milwaukee’s SBDC. She gave me the understanding to think bigger than Milwaukee, to think globally about my business and my opportunities. At her urging, she suggested I study how other SaaS companies were scaling.”

“She sent me a lot of information to consider and I devoured it all. Cheryl encouraged me to travel when I could and meet as many people as possible, to be open to learning. While I haven’t yet visited Silicon Valley, I have changed my mindset about what is possible.”

“Two years ago, she suggested I join a program focused on companies with at least \$100K in revenue who were ready to scale. I signed up and attended every session. While the formal lessons were helpful, I learned how to really network with people.”

Darren got over \$110K in additional revenue from that program and joining in with Bunker Labs. “Without participating in those two programs, I absolutely would not have had that revenue”. By participating in those programs, one thing led to another and another and another. “This revenue is directly attributed to Cheryl’s advising and urging to step away from what I already knew and open myself up to new opportunities.”

Helping other Veterans

“In the military, we learn to operate within an infrastructure. We’re preparing for battle, so you have to seize every opportunity. When we get back home, we sometimes forget we can still seize every opportunity, but we need to build a team to do that. Stop waiting – go after your dreams and seek assistance to get it done. Make a plan of action and implement that plan. SBDC has the resources to help you.”

“If there is something I can do to help you out, whether it is me or the resources on my team, I am definitely willing to help you. I’m darren@spearity.com.”

Final word

“In the next five years, I hope to not be CEO.” Darren has put his ego aside in order to really scale his business. “I will only take on an equity investor if they have clear expertise that I can



use in the business. I don't want money just to have money. It needs to be smart money." So, he plans to get to a place where an appointed CEO can run the operations and Darren can create the new products and services that can be implemented.

"By working with you, I see that possibility now. Be creative, provide opportunities for my employees and new leadership programs for my clients.

"Thank you so much, Cheryl. I appreciate you. You know that, right?"

