



[COMMUNITY](#) // January 19, 2020

# "5 Things I Wish Someone Told Me Before I Became the CEO of Group Colleges Australia," With Alan Manly

*If you don't go, you won't know. Management by walking around is still the way. A visit to a work place a customer or a supplier always allows more learning. It's the vibe of any place that tells you so much. As part of my series about the leadership lessons of accomplished business leaders, I [...]*

By [Carly Martinetti](#), 2x founder, publicist, and author at Authority Magazine



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*As part of my series about the leadership lessons of accomplished business leaders, I had the pleasure of interviewing Alan Manly. Alan is a founding Director and Chief Executive Officer of GCA group of companies. CEO and Chair of UBSS. As Chief Executive Officer he is responsible for the corporate planning and governance of the group which has as its flagship the Universal Business School Sydney, an independent Higher Education Provider that provides a Business Degree, an Accounting Degree and a Masters of Business Administration. Alan is a published author, company director and entrepreneur with over thirty years of experience in the technology and education industries. He has twenty years of experience as a Company Director with private, public and NFP companies.*

**Thank you so much for joining us Alan! Can you tell us the story about what brought you to this specific career path?**

Nothing really planned in my career. I took any or all opportunities as they presented themselves.

I applied for a computer engineer's job and chose the company on the basis of the travel options available. Training offered was in Boston USA or Sydney. I chose Boston. Brilliant move as the chosen company grew at forty percent per annum and the other one wallowed. I was trained and promoted beyond my dreams in to an executive level due in no small amount due to massive corporate growth.

**Can you share one of the major challenges you encountered when first leading the company? What lesson did you learn from that?**

To succeed you will need a professional team. This is not to be confused with a group of friends that you work with.

## **What are some of the factors that you believe led to your eventual success?**

The common answer is tenacity. I suspect it was also wanting more than just a job.

## **What are your "5 Things I Wish Someone Told Me Before I Became CEO"? Please share a story or example for each.**

#1 The most valuable element of a successful business is the customer. Run an ad for staff and many apply. Running an ad to attract customers is always a much bigger challenge. Observation: Staff are much easier to get than customers.

#2 Not all customers are worth having. If they are not prepared to pay on time for your service they may be costing more than they are worth.

#3 Cash flow, cash flow, cash flow, with a strong cash flow you can keep trading. Companies are put into administration when they run out of one thing, cash. Tradition, staff satisfaction, customer satisfaction, social conscience, all mount to naught when you run out of cash.

#4 The CEO's office is potentially the happiest room in the building. So many people bringing good news. You must focus on the goals of that department to avoid being distracted and drowned in good news.

#5 If you don't go, you won't know. Management by walking around is still the way. A visit to a work place a customer or a supplier always allows more learning. It's the vibe of any place that tells you so much.

## **What advice would you give to your colleagues to help them to thrive and not "burn out"?**

The opportunity to be a CEO is all part of your life journey that is a marathon. There will be periods of frantic activity and then there will be periods best used for thinking. If you died tomorrow few shareholders would grieve. Your family are more committed than any company group. Invest some fun time with your family.

**None of us are able to achieve success without some help along the way. Is there a particular person who you are grateful towards who helped get**

**you to where you are? Can you share a story?**

I was privileged to have a God Father of Chinese heritage. I can still hear him saying "learn to listen". He has been followed by many others from whom I have I also earnt.

**What are some of the goals you still have and are working to accomplish, both personally and professionally?**

Personally I wish to have a job that allows me to contribute for many years. I see too many bored ex CEOs. The current five year plan meets my personal and business objectives.

**What do you hope to leave as your lasting legacy?**

A well provided for family. The shareholders have also been well looked after.

**You are a person of great influence. If you could start a movement that would enhance people's lives in some way, what would it be? You never know what your idea can trigger!**

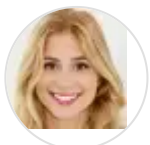
Not so sure about the great influence. Our company provides education in the form of an MBA for entrepreneurs.. Our graduates go on to follow their dreams in business. With 500 graduates each year...my work is done.

**How can our readers follow you on social media?**

Alan Manly LinkedIn

— *Published on January 19, 2020*

AUTHORITY MAGAZINE



**Carly Martinetti, 2x founder, publicist, and author at Authority Magazine**

Carly Martinetti is a writer and entrepreneur who previously founded two award-winning pet tech companies. She loves to explore the intricacies surrounding what makes a successful business leader,