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Top Hollywood producer shares secrets to success with AUB audience

Beirut, Lebanon- 25/04/2012 - One of Hollywood's top producers has shared the secrets of his unexpected success with an audience at AUB.

"The road to excelling at your passion of choice is to find your own fast lane through having fun," said Ron Senkowski, at talk entitled "Things Lead to Things: From Batman to Gibran," on April 24, 2012, at AUB. "Of course, the quest starts with failures and through trial and error you will get nearer to your own passion."

Senkowski is currently the leading producer of a film based on Gibran Kahlil Gibran's 'The Prophet'. The film is written and directed by Roger Allers, the man behind The Lion King, and is produced by Salma Hayek, a Mexican actress of Lebanese descent.

Senkowski took the audience on a journey of his career highs and lows, sharing the unorthodox manner in which he landed each of his jobs, getting the green light for his films, and demonstrating that there is no single way to achieve success.

"Looking back on it all, the number 7 has played a key role in my life and career," he said. "It took 7 days, 7 decisions and 7 actions to get me where I am today."

Senkowski was a prelaw student and sitting exams when he decided not to pursue a career as a lawyer despite having gained entry to the prestigious schools of Harvard and Yale, much to the dismay of his parents.

"The lesson I learned is that you need to change the lane when you feel you are on the wrong one," he explained.

Senkowski described how he got his first job in San Francisco, which he procured through a smile, having not even brought a resume to the interview.

"Another lesson is to always enter the room with a smile which will definitely tip the equation in your favor," he emphasized. "Also be the first to jump in, be aware of your environment and don't be shy to take a step and volunteer."

His first major movie break was working as a writer for the blockbuster Batman Forever.

Senkowski told how working as a personal assistant for director Michael Mann got him valuable showbiz contacts, as well as invites to all the best parties.

"It was a dream job, but after 3 years I parted ways to do my own thing," he said. "Working with an A list director is great but you live in someone else's shadow and it won't do, especially if you have your own fire burning inside of you."

Another unexpected detour for Senkowski was when he spotted Gibran's 'The Prophet' on a shelf during a meeting. When he asked what it was doing there, people at the meeting replied they were making a movie about it.

"Two years later when I was talking to them they still hadn't kicked off the project and that's when I wanted to do it," he said.

With over 100 million copies in print, 'The Prophet' remains one of the bestselling books in history. Senkowski described the book as a masterpiece and a visionary journey.

The movie project includes six major investors from five countries, with 10 directors, each from a different country. Hollywood stars will be lending their voices to the project and the music will include contributions from Sting, Bono and Yoyoma.

"When I was visiting the author's museum in B'sharre, the wall near his bed held the fungal image of Gibran," said Senkowski showing the picture he had taken during his trip to the north Lebanon mountain town. "Now I know that Gibran is helping us in the fast lane."

Another project from Senkowi is a film set in Beirut which he considered the best excuse to spend more time in Lebanon, and a film commissioned by the Dubai International Film Festival.

"Always listen to that voice inside of you and let it roar so that the whole world hears it, and no one will stop you unless you stop yourself," Senkowski said. "You are the driver and the universe will open the roads for you."

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 600 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,000 students. AUB currently offers more than 100 programs leading to the bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full service 420-bed hospital.

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