

You're Not In Business To Make Money!

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What's your response to this statement?

Say what? Wait a minute...of course I am in business to make money....Why else would I be doing this?

Endless pages, words and pictures spew forth about building a successful business. Most focus on various tools and techniques, but few talk about the central essence of what it is truly all about. Most CEOs scurry about fussing with figures and playing the role of wheeler dealer. Yet, most seem to miss the single most fundamental understanding of the real job description for the person in charge. It's not about power, control, ego or even financial statements.

So, what is the first, most important component common to all greatly successful businesses? It is the simple task of "holding the concept". Why are you in business? If your answer is to make money, you have a boat without a rudder – except for those in the business of printing money. Money is just a tool. It could be called the universal tool because you can do almost anything with it, if you have enough. Nevertheless it is still only a tool.

If you were a carpenter would you be working to fill your house with hammers? As a Realtor[®], do you work so you can have your picture published in your ads? Or, perhaps it's because you like talking on the phone, or wish to amass a superior computer collection? Of course not.

You're in business to provide a service. If there is a demand for your service, and you can do it efficiently at a reasonable cost, you will make money. As the person in charge, your primary focus must be on the output. What kind of service will you provide? What level of quality will you demand? How will you define that level of quality? How will you measure it? Answering these questions will help you build your vision.

Make the vision work

It doesn't take long, when starting a business, to figure out you can't do it all by yourself. You have to have help. What is their vision for the business? Why are they there? As the person in charge, it is up to you to define their role, and teach them what it is.

How many receptionists have you encountered who gave less than a sterling impression? They were just there marking time between breaks and punching out. Sure, they may answer the phone and do other tasks, but do they represent you and your vision – is it their vision too? Do they see that glorious mountain sunrise spread before them or are they mired in the jungle?

Do they even know what your vision for the company is? Do they know how to implement that vision in every phase of their daily activities? It's not automatic. You have to show them, explain it to them, then follow up to make sure they have it.

This applies to every person in your organization, and takes lots of time and effort. There is no other task more important.

Of course, you have to figure it out for yourself first. Your vision must be clear and active with energy of conviction. What does “best possible service” mean to you? What does it mean to your customers? If your idea of great service is different from your customers, you will need to change your definition accordingly. Ask your customers, they will tell you.

As your vision improves with experience and understanding, you must translate these changes to your support team. Only you can keep them on track.

A few examples of vision.

Thomas Edison had a vision of electricity powering homes and industry. He finally learned that AC would be more effective than DC. He changed his vision and made sure his people understood what they were doing and why. They prospered while others failed.

John Rockefeller was dedicated to providing energy in the form of gasoline, and making it cheaper and more widely available than anyone else. He prospered.

David Sarnoff was dedicated to bringing sound and pictures into every home. He founded RCA. After he died, the vision was lost, and the company eventually foundered.

For years, *Bell Telephone Company* held the vision of very reliable telecommunications. They prospered until the concept of high quality was replaced with greed. Now, their monopoly position keeps them in business.

Sam Walton had a vision of efficient distribution at lowest possible prices combined with reliable service. He succeeded and made a bit of money in the process.

Bill Gates focused on monopolizing the computer operating system market. He saw that software was the key, as hardware increasingly became a commodity. Microsoft is still at it.

Steve Wozniak's vision was to supply computers and software that people could easily use. Apple grew rapidly. Then the vision was lost, and the company has never recovered.

Rod Canion was determined to put low cost, reliable computers in every office. Compac grew large. When he left, the vision was blurred and growth slowed.

Michael Dell focused on making the purchase of a reliable computer easy, at the lowest possible cost. It's still working.

The people in these organizations knew what their company concept was. That's what makes an effective team – operating with the same concept.

Perhaps you don't aspire to run a giant corporation. Nevertheless, the principle is still the same. Only you can make it work.

Check out some of your most important tools.

We all have only one commodity to sell – our time. We each have only so much, and can't buy more. What makes it interesting is the many ways we can leverage the limited time available.

- Special skills are perhaps the oldest form of leverage. Whenever you can do something others can't or won't, you can earn a premium over simple labor. Your communication and persuasion skills can boost your tax bracket when properly applied.
- Special Knowledge is well established with particularly powerful leverage. You know the market, the rules and how to get things done.
- Special relationships may trace historical roots all the way back to the "oldest profession". Who you know can have tremendous leverage at times – if you know the right people relative to your vision.
- Special Equipment gives you lots of leverage when it fills a need. What kind of gadgets will make your effort more efficient? Beware of novelty gadgets that take more time than they are worth.
- The Labor of Others is ancient, but alive and well. Enlisting the services of others used to require a vision they could be part of or some form of coercion. The common use of money to replace slavery has allowed widespread growth for the simple tasks. Without an active vision, results are limited.

Marvels of Money

Money has leverage only because of its almost universal ability for exchange. While you still can't buy love or joy, you can buy lust, pleasure and most everything else.

How much is enough? If you don't make enough money, you probably won't stay in business long. Once your basic needs are met, how much more do you need?

The answer is inversely proportional to your self esteem. The greater your self esteem, the less you are driven to own the most expensive, or flashiest, or biggest of anything.

What can you do with money? You can't eat it. It makes a lumpy mattress. In your financial accounts it is just a number. If you have plenty, the envious will want some. Money is still just a tool to be used or misused as you choose.

When you set making money as your primary goal, you short circuit everything else. Costs will be cut at the expense of long term gains. Needs of team members will be ignored. Clients will be alienated. Tools that could increase long term effectiveness will be ignored. You will have to work harder all the time, and the results will never meet your expectations.

The Law of Balance

All transactions must eventually balance. This is one of the universal laws. When you take something from another, you will eventually lose. When you give something, you will eventually receive. In this society focused on instant gratification, the balancing process is not always obvious, but a careful study of history will reveal the pattern. If you really want to see the Law

of Balance working most clearly, try out past life regression. It will literally be the experience of your life.

Sure, there are those who have grown rich stealing from others, but their lives are empty of value and they get to spend their time seeking endless entertainment, while missing out on any chance of joy. When was the last time you stopped to smell the flowers along the way?

Now, what is your vision?

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