

The Right Mindset

By Harold Chapman

BE LIKE THE LION

Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up. The gazelle knows it must run faster than the fastest lion, or it will be killed. Every morning a lion wakes up. The lion knows it must outrun the slowest gazelle, or it will starve to death. The moral of the story is: It doesn't matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle. Once the sun comes up, you had better be running. There are lions and gazelles in the business world, and we must be like the Lion.

To be like the lion, we must always be improving the business. This improvement requires change organizationally, technically, and culturally. Before we commit to changing any of these, we must orient ourselves to the right mindset. We can orient ourselves by asking ourselves some very basic questions. For example, what is it that we are doing or going to do that can get everyone excited? What is the impetus for change? Why change? Changing the way we do things (especially if we have been doing the same thing for many years) can be painful, and oftentimes we would rather keep doing what we have always done. As leaders, we must craft a compelling vision that will inspire everyone to move toward change. Change is difficult, and we need all the help we can get. However, we must avoid change simply for the sake of changing. We need a vision for what the change will accomplish. The vision must be one that will evoke excitement within the team members, since it will be those team members who drive the change. A long lasting vision will be based upon principles. A long lasting vision will also be pointed in a fixed direction that will never have to be altered if it is to accomplish its purposes as we move into the future. The unwavering vision must carry us for the 100 year journey. These principles must be translated into concepts that can easily communicate where we are headed as a team in order to achieve the vision. We can then craft practices to support our concepts. Those practices are what we will ultimately implement to put our principles into action.

TRUE NORTH

This unwavering vision that will guide us for the 100 year journey is known as True North. True North is a notion of perfection. True North is thermodynamically impossible (2nd law of thermodynamics), so when explaining this concept to our team, we must be clear to state that True North is not a destination; it is a compass heading. Communicating that True North is a goal will demotivate the team. However, we must always be moving toward True North. Why is True North important? It is not enough to be just ahead of our competition. If we aren't far enough ahead of the competition, a minor slip or misstep can allow our completion to catch us or even pass us. We want to create such a large gap between us (#1) and our closest competitor (#2) that will enable us to experience great freedom in accepting risk and extending our reach on new research, innovation and



TRUE NORTH, CONTINUED...

development. Comparing ourselves to our competition can lead to our being the best of the worst. If we compare ourselves to True North versus comparing ourselves to our competition, the competition becomes almost irrelevant. Some examples of True North:

- 100% Value Add (no waste in our system)
- 100% Profitability
- 100% Market Share
- 100% Customer Enthusiasm
- 100% Satisfied Stockholders (Owners, Stockholders, Employees, Community and Employees)
- Zero Opportunity for Safety Incidents

The above compass heading gives us the constancy of purpose which will inspire us to avoid settling only for what we have today. We must always make decisions that move us closer to True North. When we are making changes or improvements, we must ask ourselves if the decisions being made are directionally correct. In other words, we must ask ourselves if we are moving closer to True North. If we discover that we are not directionally correct, we must heavily question the decisions we are making. Making multiple decisions which are directionally incorrect will lead us off course.

LEGACY LEADERSHIP

If the vision is correctly crafted, stands the test of time, and is pointed toward true north, it will be a vision that is worthy of legacy leadership. This will allow continuity between leaders within the organization as the leadership within the organization changes. This legacy leadership ensures that the incoming leader dovetails his or her plans going forward with the outgoing leader. This prevents the organization from being redirected each time we change leaders. A vision focused on principles and directed with True North will ensure Legacy Leadership as long as leaders who embrace this kind of thinking are the ones being promoted and hired. There is no room for mavericks in a World-Class organization.

Once a constancy of purpose has been established, decisions will have to be made that will move the organization forward. We can do this by setting a challenging target condition. Normally, teams set arbitrary goals based on a percentage reduction. While this approach is directionally correct, it does not provide the proper challenge for the team. It is better to start at the True North condition and compromise only when one is forced to do so. Compromise, then, will then be based on limitations which are impossible to overcome. Using this approach will bring about higher levels of improvement within the business.



DON'T REST ON YOUR LAURELS

We also can't rest on our current relationships with our clients to carry us through. Our clients are interested in getting a better deal. Even if it means going with our competition, so don't get too comfortable.

Don't Let This Happen to Your Company



Your Competition, You, Your Customer

Does your organization have the right mindset? Could you use help developing this mindset in the leadership of your organization? Are you the gazelle or the lion? Drive Inc. has years of experience coaching multinational companies in developing the right mindset to compete and win in many different industries. For a no-obligation introduction meeting, please contact Paul Eakle at paul.eakle@driveinc.com or 865-323-3491.