

Major Pitfalls to Exceeding World-Class Part 1

By Harold Chapman

WORLD-CLASS

In today's highly competitive global marketplace, setting one's sights on world-class isn't enough. The approach of the past was characterized by big companies "eating" the smaller ones. However, in today's environment, the faster companies tend to "eat" the slower companies. Our many years of experience working in many different industries and traveling the globe as management consultants have brought to our attention four main areas that separate world-class companies from those companies which are mediocre and/or "mothballed". Those four areas are Unity, Direction, Execution, and Discipline. All of the teams that have mastered these four areas are considered successful. The proof is in the results they have achieved in their businesses. Those teams which have chosen to pursue mastery in these four areas succeed, whereas, those teams which fail to choose mastery of these areas are eventually replaced and will selfishly bleed the company into a condition of non-existence. This month's newsletter is dedicated to the discussion of two of the four major areas-- Unity and Direction.

UNITY

When one enters an environment in which the leadership team is divided rather than unified, one may feel as if he/she has entered the awkward family reunion of a dysfunctional family rather than an effective leadership team. Uncle John is running the maintenance department, Aunt Suzy is running the HR department, and Cousin Larry is doing what Cousin Larry does. Cousin Larry is the plant manager only because his dad pulled some strings for him. No one listens to Larry because he is remembered as the little boy running around in diapers. The team can't get along, and it doesn't have a common understanding of the business or of the company's principles, concepts, or practices. The folks on the team don't have a common understanding because they have never taken the time to sit down and discuss the business as a team. The team members are hoping the figurative wheels don't fall off before it is their turn to retire. Everyone is out to protect themselves and what they have accumulated over the years. They don't meet regularly to set and control direction for the company, and frankly, they would prefer to never meet. However, Grandma (Corporate) makes them sit down once a year at the table, hold hands, and say the blessing. Disunity is a fatal flaw and can lead to devastating results. The senior staff of every organization has a fiduciary responsibility to do the best it can for the company. After all, there are many people counting on the leadership team to get it right. For every one employee on the payroll, another two to three people are indirectly affected by leadership. It is troubling to see companies performing poorly because the leadership is ineffective due to an inability to unify. Imagine what the workers think in this situation. If there is no unity at the top, there is guaranteed to be disunity at the bottom. There will be "turf wars" between maintenance, quality, operations, warehouse, etc..



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UNITY, CONTINUED...

We have seen plants shut down or move to another location because the leaders at the current site could not or would not get their act together. As a result of these changes real people's lives are impacted. Real families go from eating steak to beans. Little Tommy doesn't get that bike for Christmas. We at Drive, Inc. have a problem with that, and we hope you do as well. The good news is that it does not have to be that way. One of the major causes of the lack of unity among the team is that the team doesn't have a sense of direction, and that lack of direction can be corrected.

DIRECTON

The second pitfall to exceeding world class is the lack of direction. Imagine for a moment that there is a black box with wheels sitting in the middle of your office's parking lot. On each side of the box, there is a person pushing on the box. If each one of them is pushing with the same force on each side, the box will not move. If one were to ask each person if he or she was pushing, the answer would be, "Yes." However, the box isn't moving, and the team's energy is wasted. One of the team members has been told the box must be moved. Or else. That person pushes harder and eventually gets the box to move. If one were to ask the others again if they are working hard, they would again say, "Yes," and might also add that they are working even harder because they didn't want the box to come toward them. Now imagine that the four people got together and agreed to push the box in one direction. The box would move faster and further with less effort. The same scenario is playing out in businesses all over the world. Do you know what direction your black box should be moving? Does your team know?

WE CAN HELP

In next month's newsletter we will cover the third and fourth pitfall to exceeding world-class: the failure to execute and the lack of discipline. If these first two pitfalls sound familiar, Drive Inc. has experienced professionals that can lead your team through the process of becoming a world-class and beyond type leadership team. For a no-obligation introduction meeting, please contact Paul Eakle at paul.eakle@driveinc.com or 865-323-3491.

