

MetaManagement Communicator

MetaMatrix Consulting Group, LLC.
Consulting & Speaking Services

Information created to inform, educate and prepare management to lead

Article This Issue:

ENTERTAINMENT SUCCESS
LESSONS: Making Business
Shine

WASH AND DRY IN ONE
STEP: Keep Innovation Alive

We would like to thank you for listening in 2001 and offer you two FREE tools that you may find useful. We hope we have helped you in your pursuit of your life's dreams. Each one is in PDF format so that you can print then on your local printer. Use the hyperlinks on the original email or visit our site.

Snapshot Analysis - How your firm is operating
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ENTERTAINMENT SUCCESS LESSONS: Making Business Shine

Actor and director Kevin Costner attributes his directing success on hit movies such as "Dances with Wolves" to the promise he makes to staff and talent to always make THEM look good. He believes it is his job as the director to bring success to those working with him. He's committed to bringing out their best talents and putting them up in lights. What a great business management rule!

Perhaps as business people, we can learn something from the business of entertainment. What made a show like Seinfeld so successful? In addition to presenting to the public a product that people wanted, the success of the program was propelled from behind the scenes. Whether you enjoy Seinfeld or not, the show was incredibly successful bringing the talent of several actors to dominate the airwaves (cable and satellite, also) for years. Notably, Jerry Seinfeld was able to produce a product that brought out the best of its crew. In fact, he did such a good job that one might mistake talent driven by talented "management" to be the same as talent by the employees.

While Jason Alexander, Kramer and Elaine did well together, their acting did not do much to alter their ability to bring life to shows directed by others. Jason's and Kramer's shows were both no shows in the viewing department and their characters did little to show their talent if one were to believe that talent is all that is necessary to be successful. The truth is that the real talent is behind the cameras, in leadership and management.

Singer, producer, writer, entrepreneur, P Diddy knew this early

on in his career as he realized that the real money was behind the camera not in front. He has parlayed his empire from recording studios to clothing lines. His estimated worth is around \$200 million. Ron Pearlman, the creator of NSYNC and Backstreet Boys even developed a formula for developing winning, musical stars, just like McDonald's makes winning burgers. Love them or hate them, they are the people who make others shine.

Four lessons can be learned from such awareness.

1. Leadership's job in any arena is to make everyone look good, not just themselves. When the final product, job, service, is completed, everyone is to either sink or swim.
2. Those who sit in the director's chair determine the outcome of the project, group, firm. This talent and keen insight enables a group of average people to become extraordinary. Each individual by themselves may not amount to much, but with good planning, good direction and strong coaching skills, more than what was ever thought possible can be accomplished.
3. The real money comes from making decisions. While we might hear about the extremes, such as actors and sports personalities that hit the mother load, the fact is that few get \$20 million dollar deals per film or \$600,000 per game. Most never even make it to center stage. You be the judge, watch those who are big in the industry; it's the same handful of people year after year.
4. There are basic rules to successful leadership. Once you find what works for you, they can be used over and over again to develop products that win over and over again.

Everyday we have the opportunity to see new products developed by the entertainment industry. They may come in the form of a sitcom, movie or new song. However, in each case, the chances of being at the top of the charts or ratings are slim and must be based on a continual formula for success. Take a look at the big names of success who direct and create the shows. These are the true stars. Use the knowledge to make yourself stronger and your staff the best they can be. Maybe you'll find your name among the lights of success.

WASH AND DRY IN ONE STEP: Keep Innovation Alive

I was once told a story of an engineering professor who asked his students to create a product that would be able to clean dishes with minimal effort. In return, the classmates went all out in their search to create the ultimate machine.

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Some used robotics to clean the dishes to immaculate cleanliness, others created belt-driven assembly line washers. In all, the students let their imaginations run wild and the results were as different as snowflakes are unique.

During the presentation class, the professor made it a point to mention that these complex devices could not surpass the simplicity of the already existing dishwasher that could be purchased for \$200.00 at your local Sears. The moral is that in new product development you must create items that are better than existing products or they have a limited ability to sell in the market. Who wants a \$5000 robot when they can have a \$200 dishwasher to accomplish the same task?

Point well taken, but not completely accurate. It's this type of ingenuity that makes way for new and innovative, even disruptive advances. James Utterback in the book, *Mastering the Dynamics of Innovation*, clearly shows the power of new and innovative ideas and how they literally put the competition out of business. Our class of engineering students should have learned 2 lessons:

1. Don't create a mouse trap that may not be purchased.
2. Great job...the next idea for change may be a screw and a bolt away.

Here's one of those, slap the side of your head, ideas that probably would have been given the same C+ that Fredrick Smith had been given with the idea for overnight delivery. LG Electronics, under their Working Wonders TM line of washers and dryers, has created SenseClean: a washer and dryer combination machine. Put your clothing in once and when the cycle is done, the clothing comes out dry. No more touching wet underwear, shorts and t's. No more transferring of clothing mid cycle, and if you had a large family, you can have two machines each running full loads. Who would have ever thought this would be possible?

Who would have thought that we would have GPS in our cars? Who might have believed that MP3 technology would make downloading a song possible? The people who question what and how we do everything create new and wondrous worlds for us all, and it's a big part of business management to foster such creativity by not limiting one's thoughts.

For collecting new ideas:

Read: The net, books, journal, and magazines.

Research Sources: Colleges, universities, journals.

Customers: Listen to what they comment on or seek out suggestions.

Vendors: Often they have ideas they are not capable of supplying or see differently.

End Users: Many products are B2B as an element of another product, check the entire chain.

Employees: Normally an untapped source.

Contests: Get others to create for you.

Competitors: Industry and association collective competitions will give rise to new ideas.

Inventors: People who like to tinker or think

Trade Shows: Walking the aisles with pen in hand

Suggestion boxes: Make sure they're visible, accessible, and contents reviewed frequently.

Executives interested in being prepared for a tighter selling market need to give sales people products and services that others need to purchase. An advantage in new product and service development would be to save time, money, space or energy. So, don't let the ideas sail out your window, because of your biases. You steer the course of decision making and funding. Don't be afraid to take a gamble, your competitors may already be shaking in their boots also and it's the one that strategically makes the best decisions that wins. invoice.

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