



## **BUSINESS LEADERSHIP TODAY**

This article is the fourth in a series that reviews five key elements of Business Leadership: Strategic, Collaborative, Inspirational, Achievement and Conscious Leadership.

### **PART 4 – ACHIEVEMENT LEADERSHIP**

Without doubt, if any organisation, whether it be profit based, charitable, military or even sporting is to succeed it has to take action in the most relevant and effective manner. If not it will fail. Simple as that.

All organisations and personnel within them are always very busy, just ask them. Being busy is nice, it makes people feel worthwhile, it gives people and teams a reason to feel proud of what they have done. However being busy is not a measure of achievement on its own. Being busy can in fact be misleading. The question that needs to be asked is, how is busy adding value?

As has been noted in the previous articles in this series we live and work in an ever evolving and changing environment. Therefore what we were busy doing last year isn't necessarily the right thing to be busy doing this year. Therefore a major part of achievement is a desire to change and improve. This desire needs to be present in individuals and the organisation as a whole, i.e. the organisation needs to have a value around continuous improvement. In countless organisations, particularly larger ones, there are a myriad of hierarchies, standard operating procedures, set reporting lines, communication channels, set roles and responsibilities etc. These things are in place to direct action within an organisation and they serve a purpose for without them chaos would reign. However, when these things start to dominate action they also make an organisation heavy and cumbersome to evolution and change, the analogy that is often used is like trying to turn a super tanker. Worse than that, they create a culture that focuses on working within these systems rather than how their actions achieve the overarching objectives. They also make change so difficult that people give up before they even start, i.e. they create an apathetic organisation, something that is very dangerous in an evolving environment. The customer service industry often demonstrates this. How often have you contacted customer service to find they are restricted from solving the problem or to resolve the problem it has to be escalated to a higher level? This is because customer service representatives all too often are constrained in their ability to solve problems by keeping within strict policies and guidelines. An example of an organisation that has empowered their customer service staff and reaped the benefits is the online shoe and clothing retailer Zappos.com. Zappo's business model is based on customer loyalty and having a relationship with its customers. The primary sources of the company's rapid growth have been repeat business and word of mouth recommendations. To do this and overcome resistance to



online sales they have empowered their customer service staff to meet customer needs and solve problems. One of their core values that they live is to “Embrace and drive change.” In the 10 years from 1999 Zappos.com have grown from a start up to a company with a turnover in excess of \$1 billion. You can change systems and processes but if your organisation doesn’t have a change culture change will fail. If you have a change culture then people will automatically find areas to change and they will change them themselves.

Individuals, especially those in leadership roles, no matter how junior, need to look at what they do and always ask, is there a better way to achieve the objective. What can I change, what can I stop doing and what can I start doing? A trap new mid level leaders often fall into is trying to do their old job as well as the new, i.e. they just try and do more. All their careers they have been valued by others and themselves for doing, now they their true value to the organisation is more about what they do and not how much they do. Leaders need to allow themselves time to consider and review the activities of themselves and their teams. They then need to take action to instigate and drive evolution and change.

There are two critical behaviours leaders must demonstrate to be effective achievement leaders.

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