

Highly effective leadership

Nalisha Patel attended the UpClose with Stephen Covey seminar to learn more about what it takes to be an effective leader; how to create a better culture and therefore a more successful business.



Stephen Covey, author of the international best-seller *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* and one of the most renowned business minds of the century, recently presented a one-day seminar at Sky City, Auckland.

In this Red Carpet UpClose seminar, based on his most recent book *The 8th Habit*, he talked at length about "Leadership Greatness" – which focuses on finding one's own voice and then helping others find theirs through leadership.

As a small business owner it may be easy to think that all this leadership "stuff" is not relevant – but the crux of Covey's seminar is that we all need to empower ourselves first. When this happens then everyone on the team is working more productively. Everyone is therefore participating in leadership. This type of environment is based on using a win-win principle. Relationships are built primarily on trust rather than authority, so each person then thrives in the workplace. The seminar focused on the fact that being effective is no longer a sufficient solution. We are moving from an Industrial Age to a Knowledge Worker Age. Problems occur when companies follow outdated tools and skills from the Industrial era, when

they should really be focusing on creating more of a culture and looking at the whole person, or "whole body paradigm" as Covey calls it. This is the integration of mind, body, spirit and heart, which crosses over in the business world to vision, discipline, conscience and passion respectively. It is a more effective strategy, rather than the outdated focus on the body which is all about systems, things, structures and the bottom line.

Covey talks about the "map". We can have the right mindset and skills, but if the map is wrong then all else fails. He gave the example of how if he landed in Auckland and was given a Wellington map to get to his hotel, all the positive talk or motivation in the world will not get him there if he doesn't know where he is going!

He had all of us close our eyes and point "north". We then opened our eyes and saw that everyone had different perceptions of where north is. This demonstrates what goes on in most businesses. Most people have no clear understanding of where the business is headed or why.

According to Covey the four main challenges most businesses face are:

- No clear purpose or vision.
- Misaligned systems and co-dependency.
- Under-utilised talent and potential.
- Low trust.

The solution is to flip the problems on their head. Great leaders lead by example with the following:

- Clarity of purpose – articulate why goals are established and how each individual contributes to these goals.
- Align systems to facilitate the culture and achievements of the business.
- Unleash talent – utilise people's strengths and reduce their weaknesses by creating complementary teams.
- Create and inspire trust at every level of the business.

The role of a leader in any business, as

Covey defines it, is about "communicating to people their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves. It is the influence we have with others to help them discover their own voice and to find their purpose, that truly defines leadership." The action steps to implement this change are:

- First discover in yourself what your "voice" is. What is your passion? Set "wildly important" goals and strive for excellence.
- Talk to your team individually to establish what they are good at or what their "voice" is.
- Create a complementary team where one's weaknesses are made up for by other team members and each member plays to their strengths.
- Be a role model that exemplifies trust and influences those around you to want to be better.
- Unleash the talent of those around you, establish "wildly important goals" that self-motivate each person with a vision.
- Create a compelling scorecard as a way to record your and your team's forward movement.

Each of these steps is a stepping stone to ultimately creating a team and culture that works in synergy and where everyone succeeds.

Red Carpet is bringing Stephen M R Covey, Stephen's son, to speak in Auckland in May. Visit www.redcarpetpresents.com for more upcoming speakers and events which can help to facilitate faster business success.

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