
WHAT'S IMPORTANT | Volume V, Issue 1 | August 13, 2008

"What's Important" is a universal concern. The phrase resonates with an infinite number of meanings. What's important is both a question and an answer, depending on the situation.

What is the secret of "the shower moment?" You know, that moment when a great idea, a spark of brilliance, or an elusive answer suddenly appears. Maybe it doesn't happen for you in the shower. Maybe inspiration comes in the stillness between asleep and awake, or while exercising, or playing guitar, or balancing the checkbook.

Regardless of when inspiration strikes, or what form it takes, the secret is to give it an invitation and a little space to make itself known. And then, to act on it.

Yes, inspiration is indeed the act of breathing in. It is also defined as "arousal of the mind to special unusual activity or creativity." In this case, it's the act of breathing in ideas, or at least giving them the oxygen to flourish.

Inspiration is not the sole purview of the Michelangelos or DaVincis, or even the Steve Jobs and Warren Buffets, of the world. It is not some creative elixir of the past reserved for the elite few, but rather a necessary characteristic today for anyone serious about leadership.

When more than 1,500 managers were asked in a survey what they would most like to see in their leaders, 55 percent responded "inspiration." However, when asked if they could describe their current leader as "inspiring," only 11 percent said yes.

Inspiration is the secret ingredient that can help bolster morale and improve overall company performance.

In business, meaningful inspiration is the "a-ha" moment that might spark a new product idea, a more effective management approach, or a smart strategic alliance. And, it is a motivating force that can build excitement and encourage teams to see a vision of possibility, to reach beyond the status quo and venture into the world of potential.

Inspired and inspiring leaders may not be the most charismatic people in the room. They may not be the smoothest talkers. Peter Drucker once wrote, "Leadership is not magnetic personality – that can just as well be a glib tongue. It is not 'making friends and influencing people' – that is flattery. Leadership is lifting a person's vision to higher sights, the raising of a person's performance to a higher standard, the building of a personality beyond its normal limitations." Being an inspiration to others is one of the most valuable traits of a leader.

What's important is for leaders to create the mental space for an inspired idea to rush in and then motivate themselves and others to breathe life into it.

Email me at chuck@durakis.com to share your thoughts.

Thanks,

Chuck