
WHAT'S IMPORTANT | Volume VI, Issue 4 | August 4, 2010

"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.

Donald came from humble roots in a small Midwestern town. Through hard work and what others viewed as "lucky breaks", he became CEO of a successful manufacturing company. With his leadership, the company moved into new markets, created new strategic partnerships and profits reached new heights.

During an interview with the local business journal, Donald was asked what advice he most attributed to this success. He admitted that it was not something he learned in business school or from his mentors. Instead, he said it was his mother's practical wisdom that guided him.

"When it comes to making important decisions, your mind may tell you one thing and your heart may tell you something else, but always listen to your gut," she would say.

From recognizing good opportunities and pursuing them, to knowing when to walk away from deals before they turned toxic, Donald said he always did a "gut check" before making a big decision. And while his rationale didn't always satisfy those who needed a logical explanation, this approach hadn't failed him yet.

Donald Trump, Oprah Winfrey and Bill Gates have each publicly recognized the role of intuition in their success. But, this isn't a recent trend. John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie and Conrad Hilton are also known for relying on business intuition to build their companies and fortunes. Thanks to "one of Connie's hunches," Hilton woke up one morning to realize that the logically based \$159,000 sealed bid he was about to submit on a New York City property didn't feel right. The number \$174,000 kept coming to mind. He changed the bid to reflect this hunch and won. The next highest bid was \$173,000. He later sold the property for several million dollars.

Great instincts are invaluable in great leaders. In a new age of vast amounts of often competing information, the old school gut instinct is a relevant tool for discernment. These gut instincts, flashes of insight and strong knowings is another way our mind communicates.

However, this process is commonly undervalued. The "gut check" is hard to define and difficult to track in a spreadsheet. Too often, leaders ignore their inner wisdom until a crisis occurs, then it may be all they have to navigate through untested waters. Conversely, leaders who follow their instincts often avoid blunders while capitalizing on great opportunities.

What's Important is that in "listening to our gut" and honoring our business intuition, we bring more of ourselves, and our inherent wisdom and skills, to our leadership roles.

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

Thanks,

Chuck