

# Almost Every Business Leader Is Dead Wrong About What Will Make Them Successful!

## **Dare To Be Different**

By Barry Wishner

The successful business owners and executives will be those who implement the strategy of “Dare To Be Different.” The traditional way of doing business is no longer good enough. The future belongs to those who see it differently and make things happen.

In a “World of Sameness,” how will you and your company continue to grow profitably when the customer often views your products and services as commodities? No company wants their products and services to be seen as a commodity! You either differentiate yourself or get left behind and go the way of the dinosaur. Competition for the consumer dollar is fierce. Companies that get ahead in these extraordinary times will be those who allow their employees to continuously experiment, take risks and ask the question, “What are you doing to blast away the status quo and challenge conventional wisdom to be one-of-a-kind?”

As Peter Drucker said— “Whenever you see a successful business someone once made a courageous decision.” How will you go from being “me too” to “only me... no one else will do.” The challenge is to rethink all business assumptions and practices with thought provoking questions such as: “If you were starting out in business, knowing what you now know, what would you do differently?” “Is what I am doing necessary?” “If not now when?”

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someone once made a courageous decision.”**

### **Why “Dare To Be Different?”**

Pure and Simple— in a crowded marketplace you get noticed and remembered! You separate yourself and stay ahead of the competition. You monopolize your market and become the obvious choice. Fail to “Be Different” and you will be left behind.

Customers do not want to hear how big you are or how nifty your company is. They want to know how you will meet their needs better than the competition.

Are you still using platitudes to describe your company’s products and services? Biggest, Cheapest? Greatest? Can your competition use the same terms to describe their business? For example “on time and on budget” —Isn’t that what is expected? Aren’t you just stating the obvious? What is the proof or evidence that you should be the company of choice? How are you building a case so the customer knows you deliver superior value?

Are you superstitious and spending more time defending the status quo— the current way of doing things— more because fear of the future than the love of the past?

Ask yourself the following questions to develop a unique selling proposition and avoid becoming a commodity.

1. What business are you really in? Example —The Security and Life Enrichment Business?
2. What does your company offer that they can't get from any other in your business?
  1. Are you licensed?
  2. Longevity: Are you celebrating your 50th year of business?
  3. Do you provide a written guarantee?
3. How easily can others duplicate your company's products and services?
4. What do you do better than the competition?
5. Why do potential customers select you for their projects?
6. What's getting in the way (rules and traditions) at your company that are keeping you from trying new things? —or ask yourself— Is what I am I doing necessary?

As a result of being surrounded by competitors who often have access to the same products — Great Service is the competitive advantage that will differentiate you in the marketplace.

## **How To Implement A Program Of “Dare To Be Different”**

It starts with changing your mindset ( moving beyond —we tried that before, that's the way it has always been done, it's too radical a change, let's get back to reality, we're not ready for that, it won't work in our company, it's impossible, don't rock the boat, quit dreaming, it's too much work). You have to become a curiosity thinker and look at your world and business through a fresh pair of eyes.

The secret is to see what everyone else sees and doing something with it that has never been done before. It means creating an atmosphere of lets do this vs this will never work.

Try doing something familiar in a different way.

- If you're right handed write with your left hand.
- Switch your watch to the opposite wrist.
- Hold meetings in unusual places.

Grab a cocktail napkin and write down all of the assumptions you've made in the past. For example— maybe it's time to rethink commonly held practices previously implemented by your

father and grandfather. The challenge is to go beyond the way you've always done things in the past.

Set targets for growth so high that they can't be achieved unless you think and do things differently.

You might ask yourself; If you were starting in the fence industry today what would you do differently? — or — If you could write the script for your success in the next 2-5 years what would it look like?

These are specific programs that I challenge you to try:

- Have a “stupid rules” contest. Invite employees to identify rules and practices which are stupid. If the company leadership agrees the rule and activity are suspended and the employee receives a cash reward.
- Post throughout your company signs saying “No Blame... No Excuses.”
- Rename your change order to “Asset Enrichment.”
- Develop a web site that shows photos of successfully completed projects and reference letters from satisfied customers.
- Change the title of your secretary or receptionist to “Director of First Impressions.”

In short say yes to a lot of crazy ideas! Work on agitating and disturbing yourself in a positive way.

## **Dare To Be Different... The Rewards Are Incredible**

Innovative companies are more likely to generate growth rates of 20% or more than their less innovative counterparts. You might ask the question, We're making money, so why dare to be different? The answer: Differentiation is the key to growth! It reminds us all that no business strategy or formula lasts forever. Being “me too” is a great formula for going out of business.

Being different enables you to increase margins and not rely on being the low cost bid. When people remember you they call you first! •

*Barry Wishner's behind the scenes interviews of high-powered business leaders, news making entrepreneurs and ground breaking mavericks provide a cross-industry perspective into how they make things happen.*

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