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Best practices for companies moving to the next level
Friday, September 26, 2008

7 Synergies of Business Success

1. Grow from the inside out.
2. Develop a brand promise and live it daily.
3. Put people first.
4. Hire leaders and managers.
5. Lead to create wealth.
6. Values validate valuation.
7. Monitor, monitor, monitor...what ever you measure will improve.

Intangible...the quality of the company is directly proportional to the quality of the CEO.

For an assessment to see how you stack up on these issues, [click here](#)

For the **Recommended Reading List** from SmartGrowth, Inc., [click here](#).

Click here for an order form for Pam Watson Korbel's book **More Money, Less Work, More Fun! 123 ideas for smart growth in today's business environment -** <http://www.smartgrowth.com>

SmartGrowth provides business coaching for CEOs and executives; facilitation of strategy; and management

That BHAG-thing...

For me, the business term of the week is "big hairy audacious goal (BHAG)," coined originally by James Collins and Jerry Porras in their 1996 article entitled Building Your Company's Vision. A BHAG is a form of vision statement "...an audacious 10-to-30-year goal to progress towards an envisioned future."

My stories (all true) all relate to alignment of the company BHAG to the individual employees' BHAGs.

My first story is about a technology CEO who now heads a 55 person company with a full management team and complement of key staff. He's bored. The product that he invented has been proven. His management team does all the work he does not like to do and more. Other key employees are smarter than he is so he lets them run the show. I affirm that this is all good and that he just needs a new BHAG - personally. "Can I do that (implying while not letting the company down)?" he asks. Yes. Go for it.

The next encounter is a middle manager in a construction company. She is sure that her company has no leadership and that failure is imminent. She has no response to my questions about what she is doing to build a leadership team, mentor leaders, manage her leader. I inquire, "what is your big hairy audacious goal - personally?" She responds, "none"..she accomplished her BHAG when she got this job.

Finally, I listened painfully to a manager describe an employee who only puts in 40 hours a week, cannot juggle more than one task at a time, never asks for more challenging work. I asked, "what is the employee's big hairy audacious goal - personally?" The manager has never had that discussion.

All three cases illustrate that the company's march to its big hairy audacious goal cannot proceed unless it secures alignment with each stakeholder's BHAG.

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So what is a company to do?

1. A key differentiator for "A Players" (term from Topgrading by Bradford D. Smart, book published by Penguin Books) is that they each owns a big hairy audacious goal. Hire "A Players."
2. In the absence of "A Players," **develop** them. Set high expectations of employees and develop their skills and careers.
3. Provide training on **personal leadership and emotional intelligence**. The majority of the people who work or want to work for you have never been given permission to own a big hairy audacious goal nor do they know how to find one.
4. Promote and discuss **career development** actively. Tom Chappell, founder of Tom's of Maine and author of **The Soul of the Business** (published by Bantam Books), spends one hour per month with each direct report talking about each person's agenda to move ahead. Other executives who employ this tactic say that the right people stay at the company and the employees who should leave, do.
5. Hold your employees **accountable** for their futures. Teach them that self sufficiency is good and knowing who you are and where you want to go puts them in control.
6. Then, **align** all your employees, managers, executives, stakeholders to your company's big hairy audacious goal.

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