

Expert Tips & Tactics

Shangri-La

I'm sure you've done this at some point, but if you haven't, sit down with a laptop and describe your ideal business in EVERY detail...picture it down to the tissue holders in the restrooms, the pictures on the walls, the plants outside, the location...everything. Crunch the numbers. What is the business worth to you? What are you worth to it? What is it worth to your clients? Fill it with your ideal clients. How many are there? Who do you want there? What do they need? What are they doing? Put yourself there as the CEO...what are you doing? I'll bet you're not cleaning the restroom.

See the vision. See it vibrant, moving, alive and in color. Compare it to where you are right now and take another step towards that vision, no matter how small the step might be.

Sounds simple right? So why do we not do it? Why do we get trapped by our own complacency? When I wrote the column a couple of months ago on Kaizen, I was going through some re-evaluation, which is never a bad thing. My business has taken a few hits over the last couple of years that have prevented me from getting too comfortable. There are things I can control and things that I cannot control. I cannot control the weather, my clients or my employees (I can control the work that is done by my employees, but I cannot control the "life" decisions they make.)

Although I cannot control these things I can control what I have in my mind as my perfect business. I can control how I behave and respond to the inevitable changes that occur in the life of my business. Every change on the journey towards my vision is exactly that...a step *towards* my vision.

When I look at events that knock my business out of its comfort zone, I take the opportunity to dust off the vision of my ideal business and see if it is still valid. What aspects of

the vision do I need to alter? What refinements need to take place? How will the current instability create growth and learning for me, my business and the clients that it serves? How will the current instability help me to attract more clients of like mind who need what it is that we offer? How can we offer more of what our clients need and not compromise the integrity of what we do?

If I have learned anything from the martial arts over the years, it is that they are all about flow, elegance and the efficient use of energy. In itself, this piece of information should tell us something about how to deal with the things that we cannot control.

Not one of us knows how long it will take to get to our own personal Shangri-La, we don't necessarily want to force the issue, we simply want to create the vision, set the intent and consistently work towards the goal. For some of us the vision grows quickly, for others the vision is a slower growing thing. Regardless of the rate at which your vision seed grows into a tree that bears the fruits of your labors, the main point is that it is absolutely crucial that a vision exists.

By having a clear vision of where we want to go, the easier it is to deal with the boulders in the road and the places where the road seems washed away. It is easier to be resolute when people would stand at the side of the road and tell us that we are on the wrong road, or that Shangri-La is a mythical place that has no existence in reality.

It is YOUR road, others may travel along with you for a while and then turn off onto their own journeys, this is as it should be....we know this....you know this. It is the integrity of your vision that keeps you moving forward.

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