

Staying Focused on 'The Big Picture' as a Leader

I recently learned a painful lesson which helped me to realise the critical skill of focusing on 'the bigger picture'. I was getting ready to facilitate a leadership workshop for 200 managers at one of New Zealand's largest organisations. As this was an inaugural programme, the company's HR and development team kept making changes to the workbook and power point slides right up to a few days before the event. In preparing, I spent eight hours painstakingly matching the power point slide numbers to the workbook page numbers. I was so focussed on getting the details right and making sure I knew exactly what slide went with what page, that my nose was buried in the detail.

After a full day of this detailed work, I not only got a headache but also found out the page numbers I'd carefully matched up had been changed again by the HR team, and I discovered all my work had been a waste of time.

Although I was more than frustrated at the time, I later had a laugh to myself at the cosmic joke of me leading a workshop called 'Understanding the Big Picture', while I was only focusing on the minute details of page numbers. I spent the rest of my preparation time putting my focus where it should have been in the first place: on the overarching concepts I would be discussing, ie. the bigger picture.

So, how do you manage to staying focused on 'the big picture' of your vision and purpose in your organisation?

Your primary job as a leader is to be a wayshower and guiding light, helping others to stay focused on the mission and reason they're doing what they're doing. Ideally, you inspire people with your 'voice of leadership', changing their lack of clarity and confidence into positivity and commitment in moving forward.

As a leader, how many things do you need to juggle at once? It's not easy to staying focused on your vision while you're trying to manage the details as well.

Just take a moment to think about everything in your business that you need to keep your eye on.

You've got at least 10 areas to handle:

1. Your Purpose and Strategy
2. Marketing/Sales
3. Finances
4. Administration
5. Professional Development
6. Competition
7. Technology
8. Research
9. The Economy
10. Compliance

So, how are you handling all of these areas? Chances are, if you're like most leaders, you do drop a few balls occasionally. Usually, it's impossible to keep your eye on all the balls at once.

When you're overwhelmed with what you have to juggle, I recommend focusing on 'the big picture', that is...your message and mission...the primary reasons you do what you do...the main service you offer the world.

When you're focused on the big picture, the small things don't seem so overwhelming. Yes, the details are important, but it does not help to focus on the details if it means you lose sight of your main goal. As a leader, holding on to the larger vision is one of your main responsibilities.

Fortunately, I managed to keep my eye on the ball of the 'bigger picture' during the leadership workshop I led, and it was successful and well-received. I also learned a few important lessons as well:

Being a leader means holding a vision for your organisation and continually inspiring and reminding your team of that vision to keep them moving in the right direction.

Being a leader means embracing a wider perspective, while your team navigates the details.

Here's to you finding your 'voice of leadership' as you keep your eyes firmly focussed on the big picture, guiding your organisation along the path to success.

The next 'Voice of Leadership': Giving Confident, Dynamic and Engaging Presentations course is scheduled in Auckland for the 4th August...see details [HERE](#)

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